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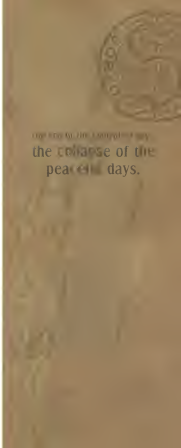
As Maki and the others are always by my side, I feel at ease--even if we live in a secluded world...



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ハツカネズミの時間

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ハツカネズミの時間 2

冬目景

講談社

As Maki and the athers are always hy my side,
I feei at ease–even if we live in a secluded warld...

ハツカネズミの時間 2

THE HOUR OF THE MICE

KEI TÔME

冬目景

ハツカネズミの時間 2

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Chapter 2
輪転 #3
ROTATION

kolonoka.monkey.pirates.com

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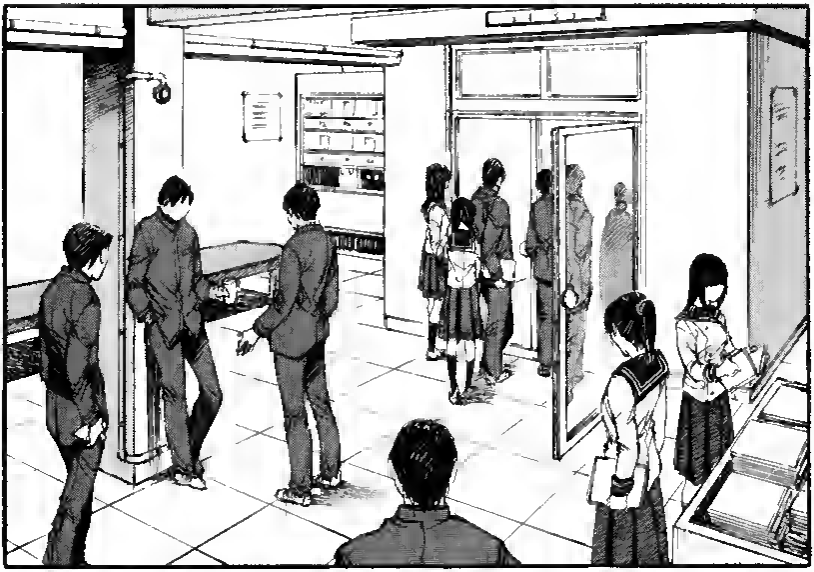
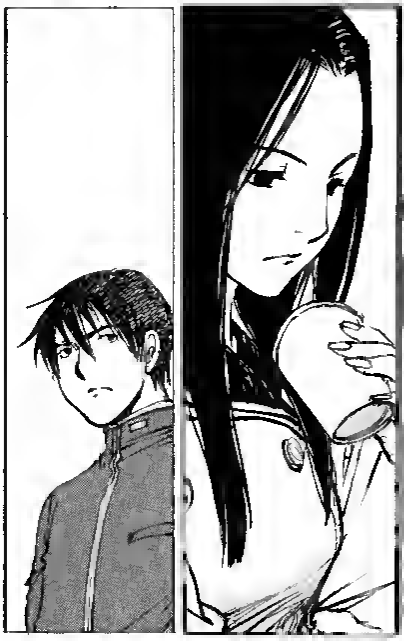
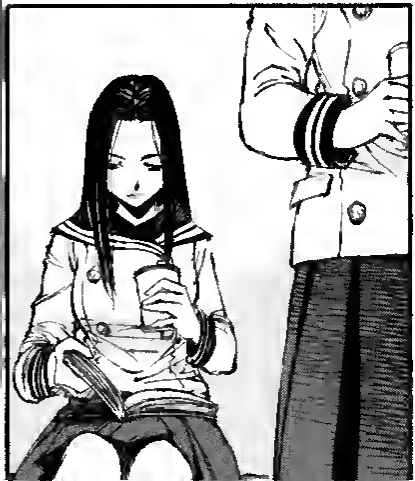
MAKI!





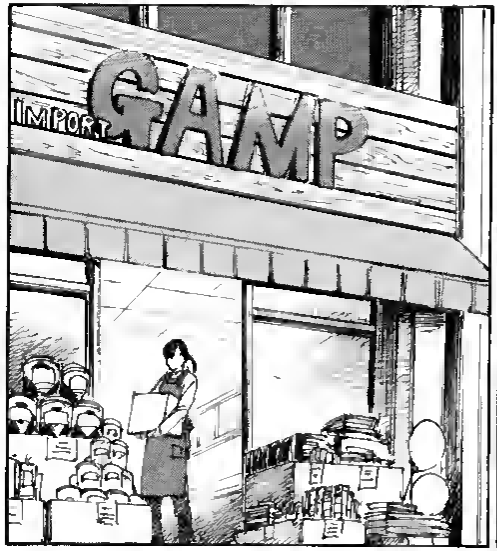


KIRIKO.
WHAT HAPPENED?
-- TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING...
I NEED --
I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU
...
SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
I JUST HAD TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

DON'T TALK TO ME ANYMORE.
IT'S DANGEROUS TO RUSH THINGS. WE SHOULD SIT TIGHT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS
IT'S NO USE.
SHE WON'T EVEN LET ME TALK TO HER.
...

Tokyo
THERE WE ARE ...
I'VE ACTUALLY HANDED IT TO YOU THAT'S QUITE A BUNCH OF MONEY, Y'KNOW
YEAH. .
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP
HEY...
IT'S TRUE, THEN?
KIRIKO'S BEEN BROUGHT BACK THERE?

ARE YOU GOING TO RESCUE HER?
PROBABLY . . .
I'D LIKE TO HELP, BUT . .
I CAN'T FIGHT THEM.
I DON'T WANT TO BE REMINDED OF THAT ACADEMY . .
I'D PROBABLY BE USELESS.
I'M NOT LIKE YOU. IT'S ENGRAVED IN MY BRAIN.
NO, YOU'RE FAR FROM VANQUISHED
I'M. . . A DEFEATED MAN
BUT AFTER LOSING EVERY-THING . I'VE BECOME MORE HUMAN.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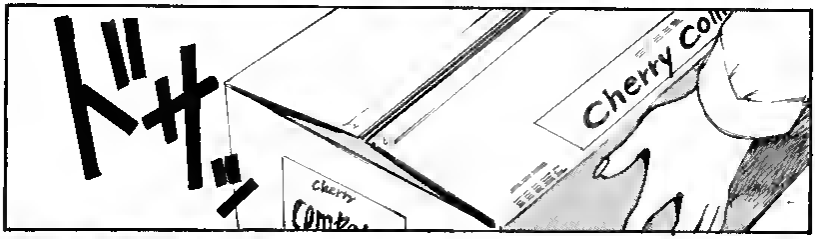

ドサッ
Cherry Co

NAGI...

AYAKO

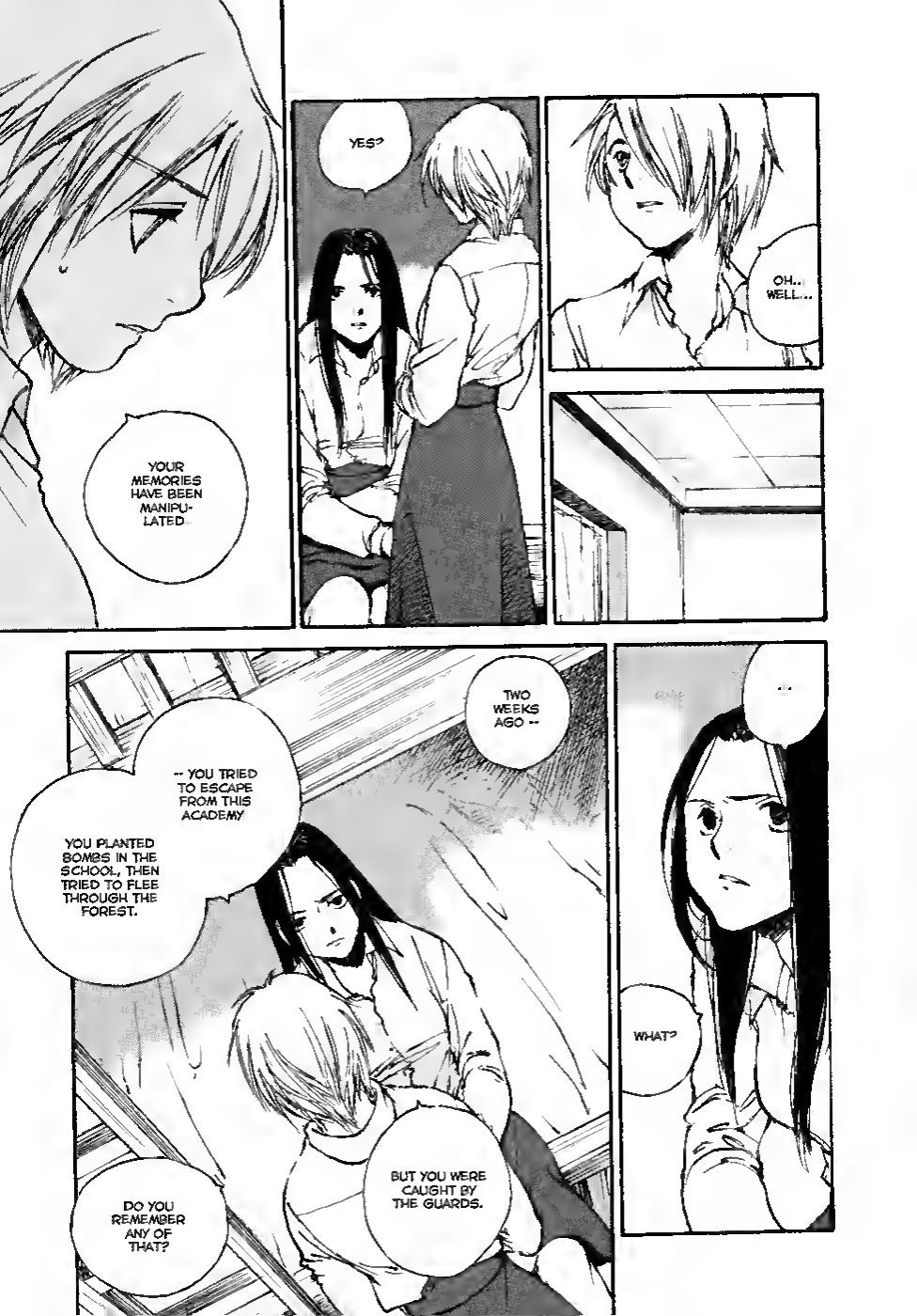
SOLLED

LIAR!
YOU SAID SHE WAS YOUR YOUNGER SISTER!
THAT'S IT? YOU AREN'T MAD?
...
YOU HARDLY DROP BY MY PLACE NOWADAYS.
I CAN'T REALLY LET MY APARTMENT STAY EMPTY, RIGHT?
SORRY.
IT WAS TOO COMPLICATED TO EXPLAIN AT THE TIME
SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A RELATIVE, SO I TAKE CARE OF HER.
HER PARENTS DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT WHEN SHE WAS FIVE.
WHAT KIND OF LAME-ASS LIE IS THAT?
I-IT'S THE TRUTH!
LIKE HER, I HAVE NO PARENTS, AND SINCE THERE WAS NO ONE TO TAKE CARE OF HER, I TOOK HER IN.

ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?
I'D NEVER DO THAT.
YOU SEE, IT'S REALLY AS IF SHE WERE MY LITTLE SISTER.
...
...
IS SHE STILL NOT BACK YET?
YEAH... SHE'S PROBABLY STAYING AT A FRIEND'S PLACE
...
I'LL STOP BY TODAY AFTER WORK

{knock knock}
コーン コーン
?
コーン
{knock knock}

SONOKURA, FROM NEXT DOOR.
UM... MAY I TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE?
ER... YOU ARE...
WHAT IS IT?
...
SURE. COME IN.
THANKS.

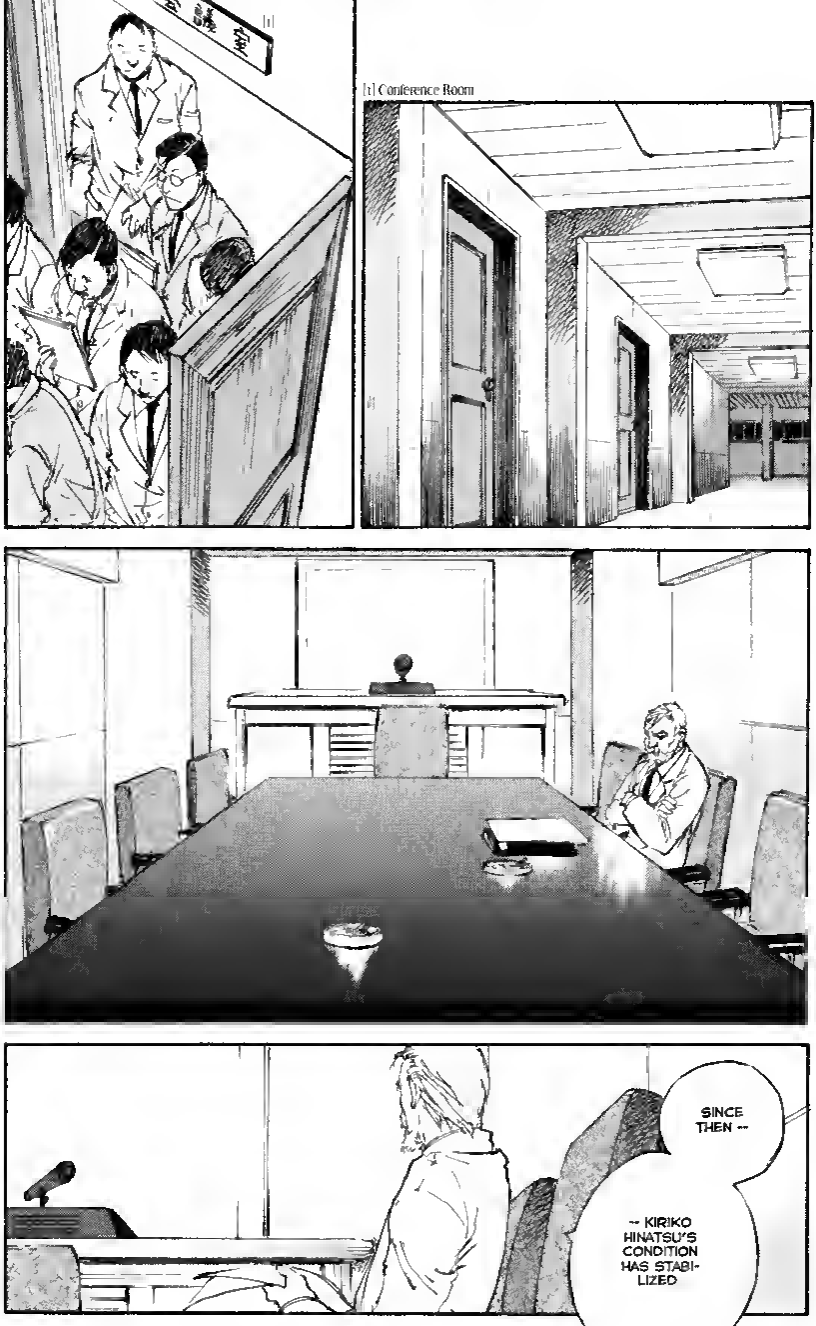

YOUR MEMORIES HAVE BEEN MANIPU-LATED.
YES?
OH.. WELL...
DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THAT?
BUT YOU WERE CAUGHT BY THE GUARDS.
-- YOU TRIED TO ESCAPE FROM THIS ACADEMY
YOU PLANTED BOMBS IN THE SCHOOL, THEN TRIED TO FLEE THROUGH THE FOREST.
TWO WEEKS AGO --
...
WHAT?

WHO AM I?
..
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE ME --
-- BUT I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.
YES.. I'M CERTAIN I TRIED TO ESCAPE FROM HERE.. NO..
I DID ESCAPE
YES.
I LEFT --
-- THAT WOMAN'S PLACE WITH HIM.
WE MOVED TOGETHER INTO AN APARTMENT.

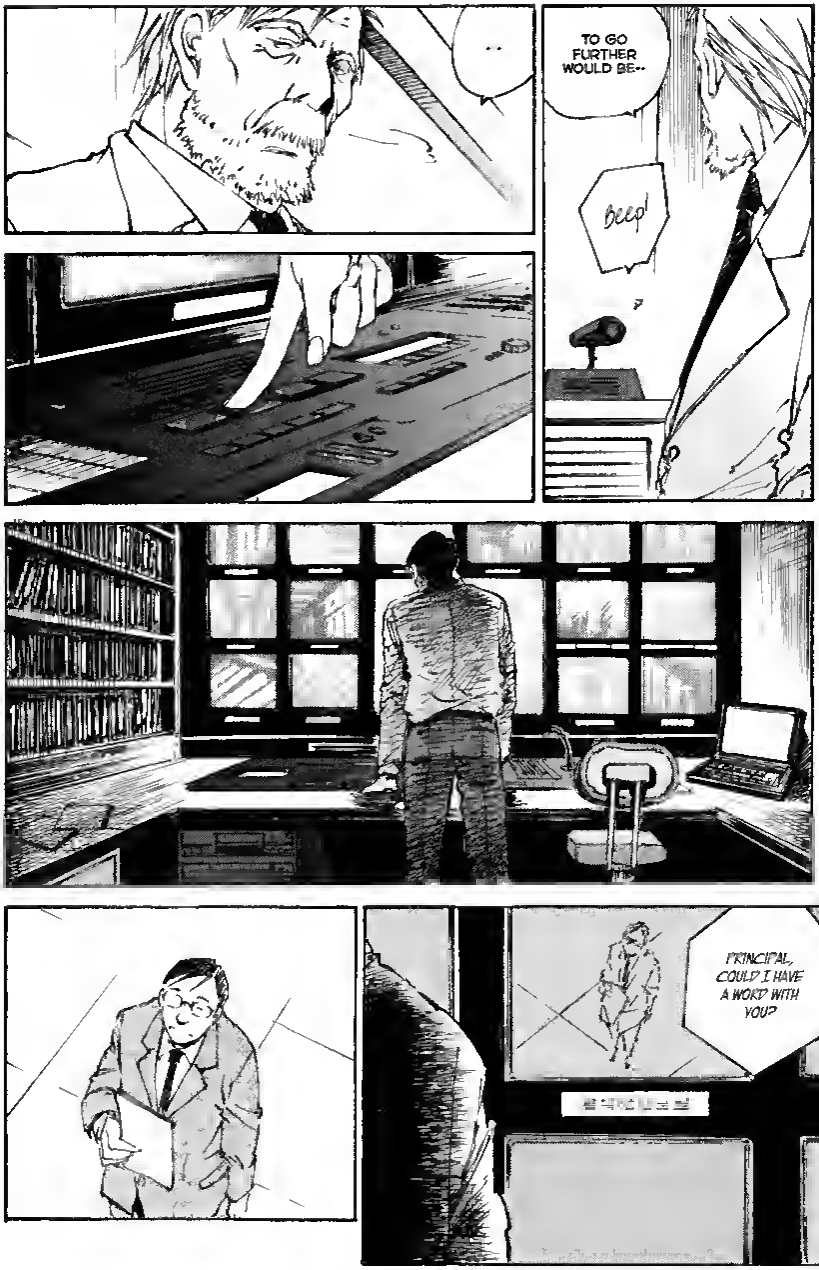
HE...
TOOK CARE OF ME.
IT WAS OLD AND DIRTY...
A PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.
HUH?
WHO -- -- IS THIS MAN?
BUT... I CAN'T REMEMBER.
YOU KNOW HIM, DON'T YOU?
TELL ME.
?

WHY IS HE HERE?
I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
..
COULD HE BE MAKI --
-- BY ANY CHANCE?
..
I KNOW IT'D BE BETTER IF I DIDN'T REMEMBER..
AFTER ALL --
-- HE WAS MY ACCOMPLICE.

YOU'RE CERTAINLY --
-- CONFUSING MAKI WITH SOMEONE ELSE.
WE'LL HELP YOU
I DON'T KNOW...
TRY TO REMEMBER.
BECAUSE WE NEED YOU.

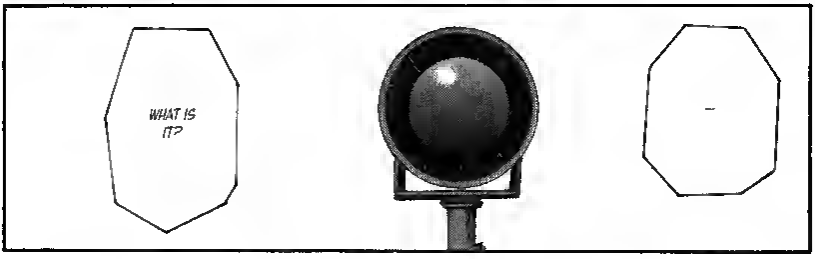

[1] Conference Room
SINCE THEN --
-- KIRIKO HINATSU'S CONDITION HAS STABILIZED

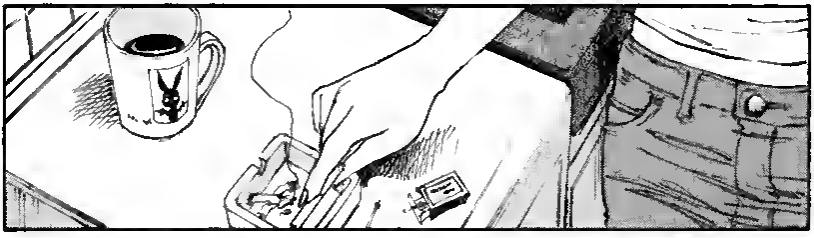
A MANIPULATION --
-- ERROR ON OUR SIDE?
SHE DOES NOT --
-- REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE MAN SHE LIVED WITH.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY ERASED FROM HER MEMORY.
I SEE
ONE DAY --
-- YOU WILL INHERIT NARUSAWA PHARMACEUTICALS.
YOU SHOULD NOT INVOLVE YOURSELF WITH SUCH TRIFLES
..
MAYUMI, SIR ..
THAT MAN.. NO LONGER POSES A THREAT TO US.


...
TO GO FURTHER WOULD BE--
beep!
PRINCIPAL, COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

WELL... THERE'S A BIT OF TROUBLE.
UM... I DIDN'T MENTION THIS DURING THE LAST MEETING, BUT .

EXCUSE ME.
キィ

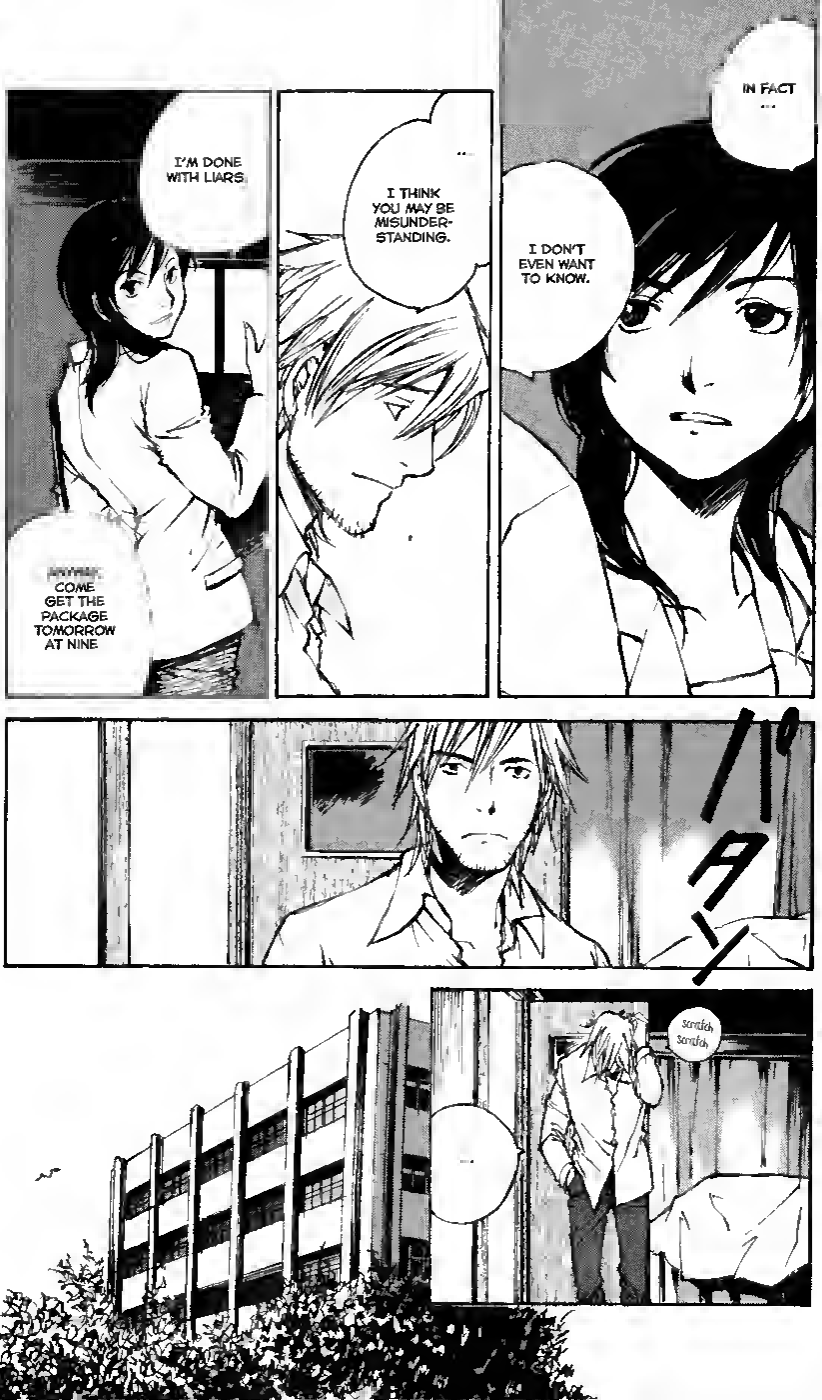

WHAT IS IT?



YEAH, THANKS
COFFEE?
HEY, I KNOW THIS ONE I READ IT WHEN I WAS A KID. THIS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
A PICTURE BOOK.
SHE'S STILL JUST A LITTLE GIRL, DESPITE EVERYTHING SHE SAYS.
EVEN AT HER AGE, SHE STILL KEPT READING IT AGAIN AND AGAIN.
IT'S KIRIKO'S.

...
SURELY NOT. SHE'S ADULT WELL ENOUGH
SHE SAID SHE WAS TWENTY --
-- BUT SHE'S ACTUALLY STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL, ISN'T SHE?
ND CLEVER, TOO.
HOW COME SHE DOESN'T GO TO SCHOOL?
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER.
WHICH REMINDS ME..
THE PACKAGE YOU ASKED FOR --
-- ARRIVES AT THE STORE TOMORROW
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AGAIN
THE ADDRESSES OF THE SUPPLIERS ARE CHANGING TOO OFTEN. FORGING DOCUMENTS IS A LOT OF WORK.
YOU SHOULD COME GET IT BEFORE THE MANAGER CHECKS THE GOODS.
I KNOW.

YOU CAN STAY, YOU KNOW.
I HAVE TO FEED MY CAT.
WELL...
I'M GOING HOME...
...
ARE YOU STILL MAD AT ME?
I'M NOT COMING BACK ANYMORE.
I'M NOT, BUT I DON'T LIKE THIS.
THEY WON'T JUST FIRE ME IF I GET CAUGHT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING, BUT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
AND WHEN WE'RE DONE --
-- WITH THIS BUSINESS, DON'T COME TO THE STORE, EITHER.

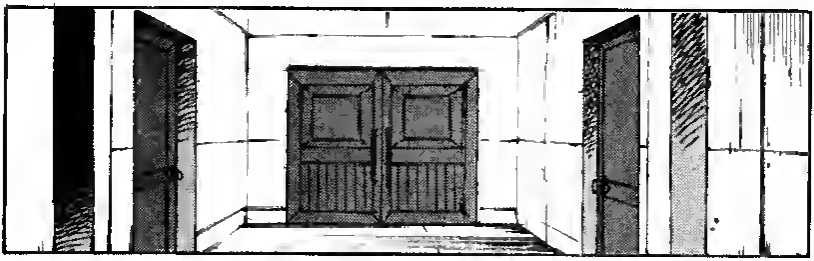

I'M DONE WITH LIARS.
COME GET THE PACKAGE TOMORROW AT NINE
...
I THINK YOU MAY BE MISUNDER-STANDING.
IN FACT ...
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO KNOW.
パタン
Scratch Scratch
...

NATSUME MUROKI FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION.
NATSUME MUROKI FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION.
PLEASE COME TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

ME...?

NOTHING! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
WHAT DID YOU DO AGAIN?

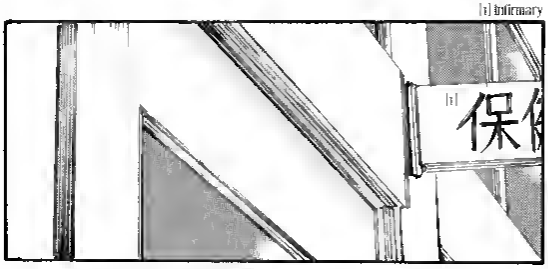
GO THERE, ANYWAY. WE'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
IF THAT WERE THE CASE, WHY WOULD THEY ONLY CALL YOU?
-- THAT THEY KNOW ABOUT THE OTHER BUILDING ON THE NORTH SIDE?
IS IT POSSIBLE --



HUH?
YOUR PARENTS GOT IN TOUCH WITH US THE OTHER DAY.
THEY REQUESTED THAT YOU BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER SCHOOL.
THEY WANT YOU BACK HOME

Chapter 2
輪転
ROTATION #4

NATSUME.
HOW WAS IT?
I'M NOT SURE...
MY HEAD IS A REAL MESS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.. LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.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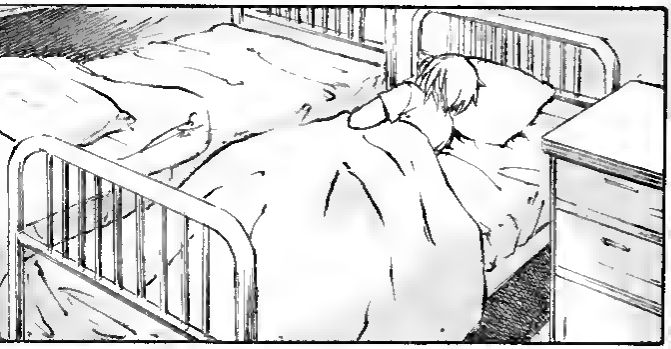
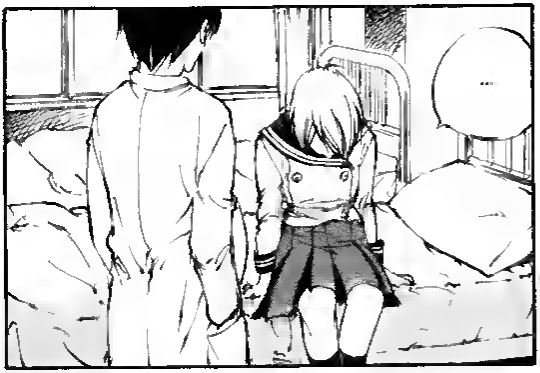


OK... TONIGHT, YOU KNOW WHERE.

I'M READY TO GO BACK TO CLASS.
TAKE IT EASY.

OH...
MUCH BETTER, THANKS TO THE NAP.

HOW DO YOU FEEL, MS. SONOKURA?



NEVER MIND.
IT'S NOTHING.

I WONDER IF MS. OTAKI KNOWS –
– ABOUT THIS SCHOOL.
IS SHE LIKE THE OTHER TEACHERS?
IF KIRIKO DOESN'T RECOVER HER MEMORIES –
– WE'LL HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO FIND THE TRUTH BY OURSELVES.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
YOU ESCAPED FROM HERE IN THE PAST.
THEN YOU CAME BACK.
I CAN'T GO WITH YOU.
I DO REMEMBER YOU.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

YOU'RE QUITE THE INSOLENT BRAT
NO ONE WILL EVER COME HERE...
-- EASIER IF YOU HAD STAYED A CHILD
IT'D HAVE BEEN
WHO ARE YOU?
THE ONE WHO RAISED ME... MY... WHAT?

YOU'RE SO NEAR, AND YET SO FAR.
THE PERSON DEAREST TO ME...
THAT'S WHY I MUST NOT REMEMBER YOU.
I MUST NOT TELL ANYONE ABOUT YOU.

WHO ARE YOU?
I'M JUST LIKE YOU.

NO...
BUT WE DECIDED ON A SIGNAL
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER ALL DAY LONG.
DID ANYBODY GET IN TOUCH WITH HER?
WHERE'S MEI?
-- BY THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAFETERIA.
SIMPLY TIE A HANDKERCHIEF ON THE PIPE --
YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR CLASS
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TODAY?
I SEE.
OH, THERE SHE IS

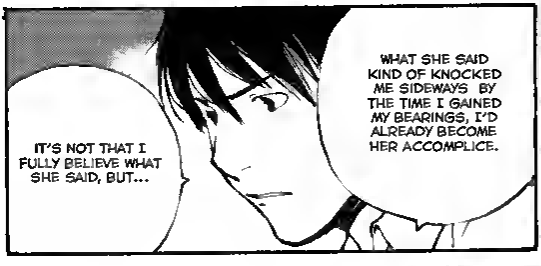
I DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP LAST NIGHT SO I TOOK A NAP AT THE INFIRMARY THAT'S ALL
YOUR HEAD CLEAR NOW?
ANYWAY, THIS IS ABOUT NATSUME, ISN'T IT? I HEARD HIS NAME ON THE SCHOOL PA.
NO ..
NOT REALLY ...
THE PRINCIPAL EXPLAINED THE SITUATION TO ME. ..
THEY --
-- ARE SENDING ME BACK TO MY PARENTS ..
BUT I'M STILL CONFUSED.
THEY MAY BE MY PARENTS, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER THEIR FACES OR EVEN THEIR VOICES.

AND WE'VE NEVER TALKED TO OUR PARENTS SINCE...
WE WERE TAKEN HERE BEFORE EVEN REACHING THE AGE OF REASON.
-- ANY STUDENT IN THIS SCHOOL..
THE SAME COULD BE SAID ABOUT --
HONESTLY, I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT..
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT..
THE BOND BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILD IS OFTEN DESCRIBED IN NOVELS AND STORIES --
-- BUT IS IT REALLY THAT DEEP A RELA-TIONSHIP?
KIRIKO TOLD ME, BACK THEN...
HMM?
GASP
WHAT IF NONE OF THE STUDENTS HERE ARE REGIS-TERED ANYWHERE AS A CITIZEN?
WHAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE PARENTS, NOT EVEN RELA-TIVES, IN THE FIRST PLACE?

...WE HAVE NEITHER PARENTS NOR IS OUR EXISTENCE RECORDED ANYWHERE
SHE

I DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD BELIEVE HER.
SHE TOLD ME MANY OTHER THINGS, BUT AS FOR KNOWING WHETHER SHE TOLD THE TRUTH.

...IS IT TRUE?

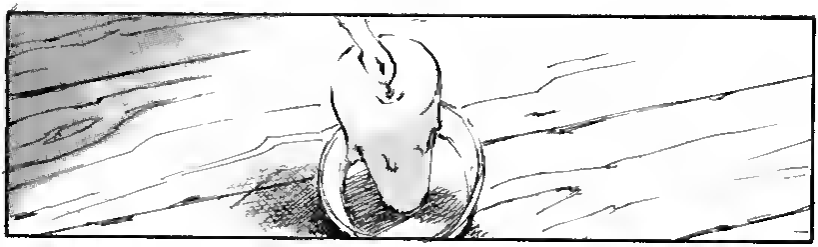

WHAT SHE SAID KIND OF KNOCKED ME SIDEWAYS BY THE TIME I GAINED MY BEARINGS, I'D ALREADY BECOME HER ACCOMPLICE.
IT'S NOT THAT I FULLY BELIEVE WHAT SHE SAID, BUT...

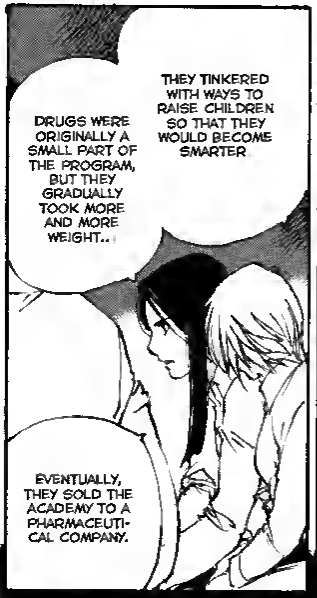
WE CAN'T TRUST THE ACADEMY ANYMORE
SINCE I REMEMBERED HER I COULDN'T JUST REJECT IT.
WHAT'S MORE, OUR MEMORIES HAVE BEEN ALTERED. AND NOW WE KNOW THAT HERS HAVE BEEN ERASED, TOO.

ALL OF IT IS TRUE.

KIRIKO
...
HOW'D YOU FIND THIS PLACE?
MEI TOLD ME ABOUT IT YESTERDAY EVENING.

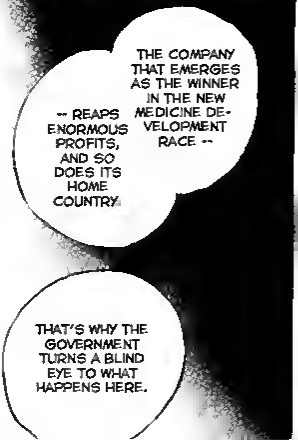
A FEW THINGS ARE STILL BLURRED HERE AND THERE.
BUT I FEEL MY MEMORIES ARE GRADUALLY COMING BACK.
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER?
MEI...?
KIRIKO. .
I HAVEN'T TOLD THEM EVERYTHING YET.
I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THOSE THINGS MYSELF.
EVERYTHING I TOLD MAKI IS TRUE.
BELIEVE ME.
TELL US EVERY-THING.




DRUGS WERE ORIGINALLY A SMALL PART OF THE PROGRAM, BUT THEY GRADUALLY TOOK MORE AND MORE WEIGHT..
THEY TINKERED WITH WAYS TO RAISE CHILDREN SO THAT THEY WOULD BECOME SMARTER
EVENTUALLY, THEY SOLD THE ACADEMY TO A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY.

ITS PURPOSE WAS TO TRAIN SCHOLARS AND ENGINEERS.
THIS ACADEMY WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT BY THE GOVERNMENT.
AS JAPAN LACKS NATURAL RESOURCES, THE GOVERNMENT AT THE TIME ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIGHER EDUCATION WAS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A MODERN INDUSTRY BACKED UP BY A TECHNOLOGICAL NATION.

AS I ALSO TOLD MAKI, THE OBJECT OF THIS COMPANY IS...
HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION.


-- REAPS ENORMOUS PROFITS, AND SO DOES ITS HOME COUNTRY.
THE COMPANY THAT EMERGES AS THE WINNER IN THE NEW MEDICINE DEVELOPMENT RACE --
THAT'S WHY THE GOVERNMENT TURNS A BLIND EYE TO WHAT HAPPENS HERE.

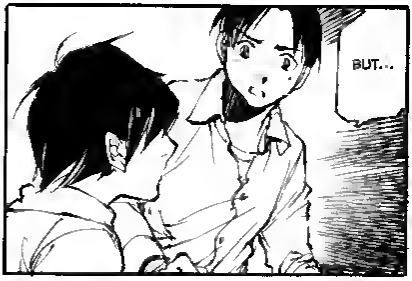
THAT'S AWFUL...
WHY... WERE WE BROUGHT HERE?
BECAUSE WE WERE SOLD BY OUR PARENTS.
IN THE HOSPITALS THEY MANAGE NARUSAWA PHARMACEUTICALS SECRETLY BUYS NEWBORNS FROM THEIR PARENTS.
FROM MOTHERS WHO CAN'T RAISE THEIR CHILDREN OR WHO DON'T WANT THEM.
THE BOUGHT BABIES ARE RECORDED AS STILLBORN --
-- WHICH IS WHY THEY DON'T OFFICIALLY EXIST.

WE DON'T APPEAR IN A SINGLE ONE OF THE WORLD'S OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.
THEN ...
WHY DOES MY MOTHER --
-- WANT ME BACK NOW?
I DON'T KNOW...
YOUR MOTHER'S MEMORIES WERE PROBABLY MANIPULATED, TOO.
BUT THE PROCEDURE ISN'T PERFECT.
PERHAPS SOMETHING TRIGGERED HER MEMORY
THEY SURELY DON'T WANT THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO KNOW ABOUT THIS SCHOOL.
THEY WOULD NEVER ACCEPT SUCH A REQUEST.

I DON'T KNOW ALL THE DETAILS...
BUT IN ANY CASE, SINCE THE SCHOOL ACCEPTED, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS PLACE.
I WONDER IF THERE COULD BE SOME POLITICAL MACHINATIONS BEHIND THIS. .
I DON'T WANT TO...
I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU.
...
THAT'S TRUE, NATSUME
YOU CAN LEAVE.

AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO WANTS TO ESCAPE MORE THAN ANY OF US?
YOU NOW KNOW THE TRUE FACE OF THIS SCHOOL.
YOU SHOULD LEAVE WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE CHANCE.

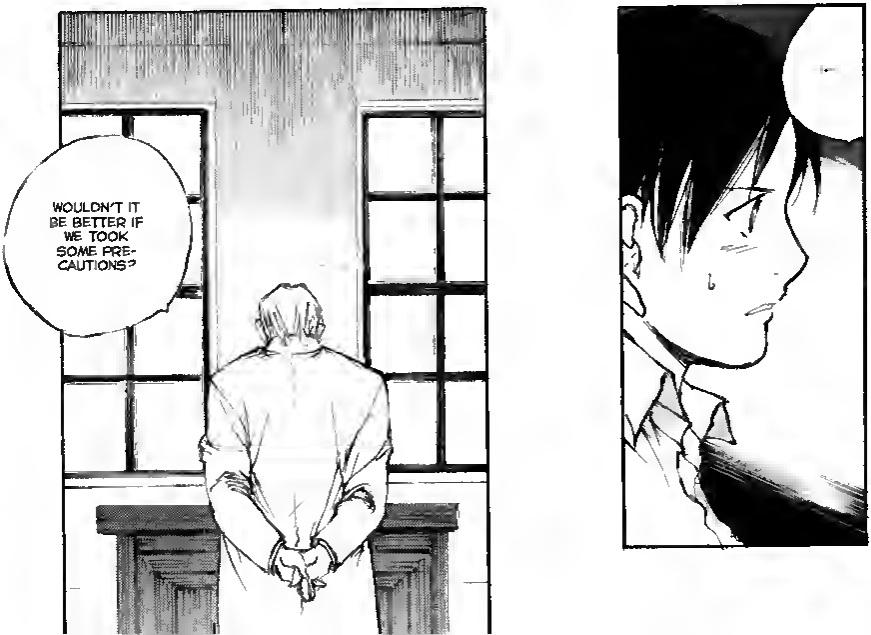
BUT... IF WE TELL THE OTHER STUDENTS --
-- IT'LL CAUSE A HUGE UPROAR, AND EVERYONE WILL BE ABLE TO ESCAPE.


BUT...

NATSUME ..
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.

WE HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED TO HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
WE ARE CHOSEN PEOPLE.
THE ACADEMY IS THE PLACE WHERE THE STUDENTS FEEL THE MOST SECURE.
NOBODY WILL BELIEVE US

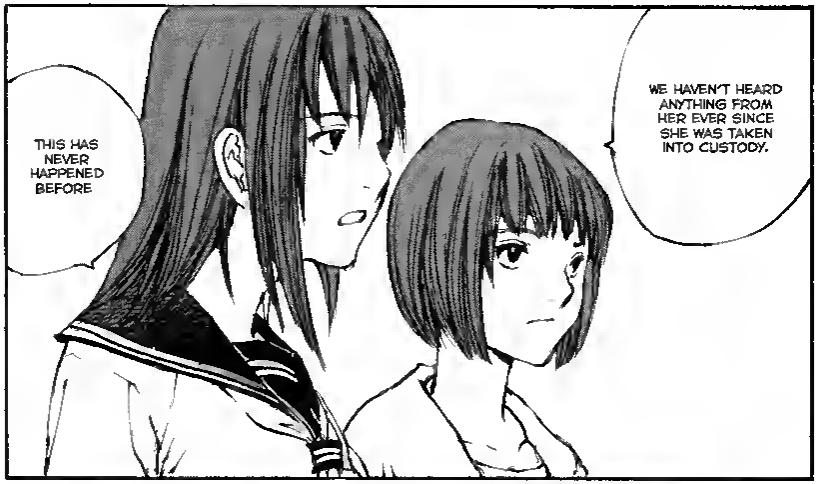
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE TONIGHT.
WE HAVEN'T LOST OUR CAPACITY FOR EMPATHY
BUT WE AREN'T LIKE THE OTHERS.


WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER IF WE TOOK SOME PRE-CAUTIONS?

THEY SAY THEY WILL BE SATISFIED WITH OUR HANDING OVER THEIR SON TO THEM.
THUS, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TO GIVE HIM BACK.
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
IT'D BE TROUBLESOME IF THEY CAUSED A STIR.
SHE SOLD HER CHILD LONG AGO, BUT THIS WOMAN IS NOW THE WIFE OF A CONGRESSMAN.
UNDERSTOOD.
MINOKIDA.
I LEAVE THE REST OF THIS MATTER IN YOUR HANDS.

Chapter 2 輪転 #5
ROTATION

WHERE'D KIRIKO GO?

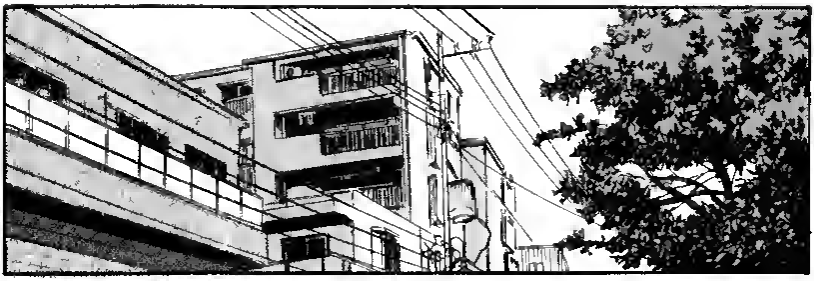

WE HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING FROM HER EVER SINCE SHE WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.
THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE

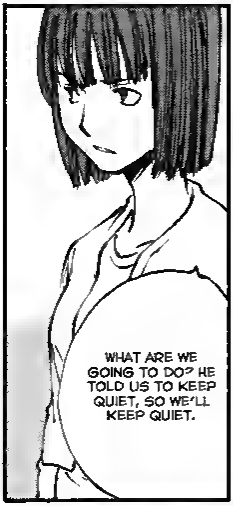
THIS TIME, SHE DIDN'T JUST RUN AWAY
NAGI, YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS, DON'T YOU?

IF YOU DON'T, SHOULDN'T YOU AT LEAST FILE A MISSING PERSON REPORT WITH THE POLICE?
MIND IF I SMOKE?
IT'S JUST LIKE KIRIKO SAID.
NAGI DOESN'T CARE A BIT ABOUT HER.
FORGET IT, MIYA!
ダッ

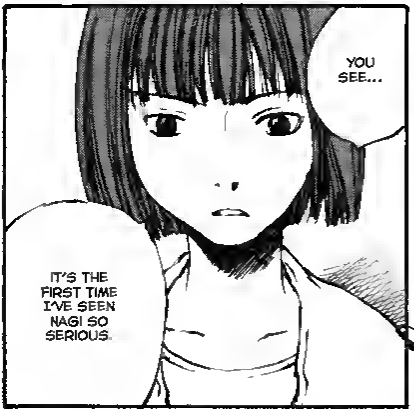
WAIT
COME ON, MIYA.
WE'LL LOOK FOR HER OURSELVES
KIRIKO WILL COME BACK
SO DON'T GO KICKING UP A FUSS.

DON'T ASK ME TO SAY ANY MORE --
-- OR I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE THIS PLACE.
THAT, I CAN'T TELL YOU
WHERE IS SHE?
IF YOU CARE ABOUT KIRIKO --
-- KEEP IT QUIET.
IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE WE FIRST CAME TO THIS TOWN.
WE'VE NEVER STAYED THIS LONG IN THE SAME PLACE BEFORE.




WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? HE TOLD US TO KEEP QUIET, SO WE'LL KEEP QUIET.

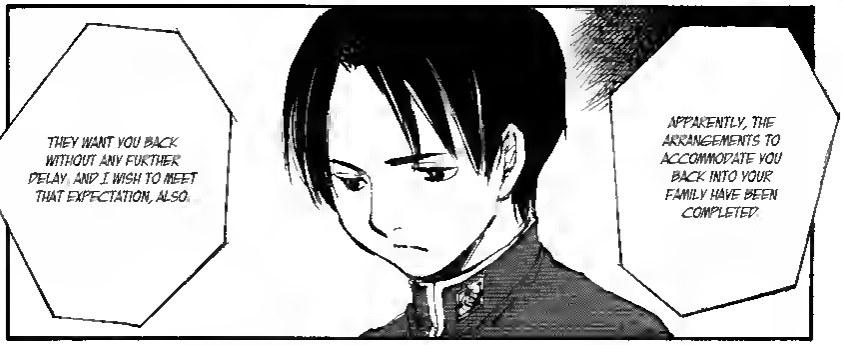
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, MYA?


YOU SEE...
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN NAGI SO SERIOUS.

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

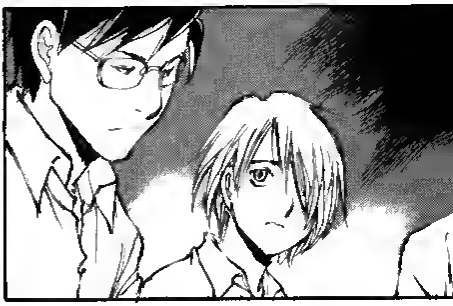
I ALWAYS FELT LIKE HE AND KIRIKO HAD A COMPLICATED LIFE, THOUGH.

THEY'RE NOT ACTUALLY SIBLINGS, AND YET NAGI TOOK CARE OF KIRIKO...
IT'S AS IF HE WERE HALF HER FATHER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON --
-- BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT THOSE TWO --
-- ONLY TRUST EACH OTHER


THEY WANT YOU BACK WITHOUT ANY FURTHER DELAY. AND I WISH TO MEET THAT EXPECTATION, ALSO.
APPARENTLY, THE ARRANGEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE YOU BACK INTO YOUR FAMILY HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

...
AFTER THAT, YOU WILL BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE SCHOOL.
AT YOUR PARENTS' REQUEST, YOU WILL UNDERGO A COMPLETE MEDICAL EXAMINATION, WHICH WILL LAST FOR A FEW DAYS

THIS IS PROBABLY THE LAST EVENING I'LL BE HERE...
STARTING TOMORROW I'LL BE ADMITTED TO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.



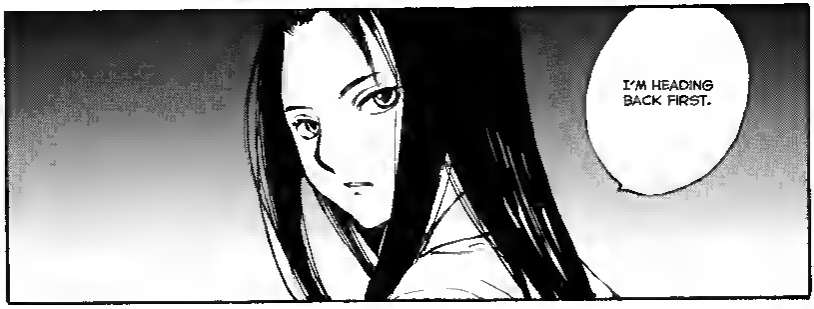
THEY'LL --
-- PROBABLY ERASE MY MEMORIES.
THAT'S PROBABLY TRUE.
AND I'LL FORGET ABOUT ALL OF YOU.
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
BUT... I THINK IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.

IT'S REALLY SAD.

THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S BETTER IF YOU FORGET EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS SCHOOL
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.

BUT YOUR FRIENDS WILL REMEMBER.

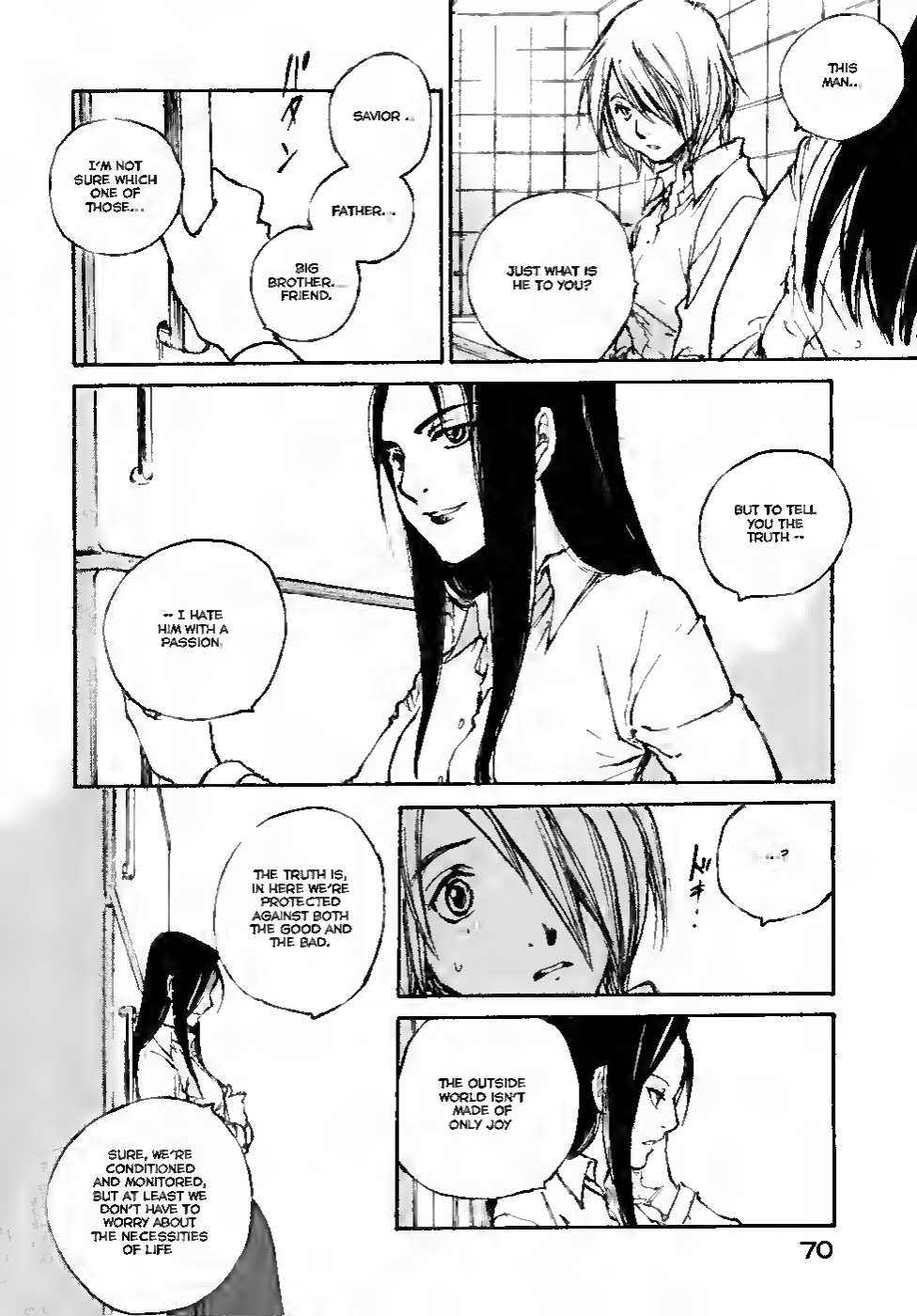
KIRIKO.


I'M HEADING BACK FIRST.

YOU WEREN'T IN YOUR ROOM...
I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE YOU WEREN'T FEELING WELL
KIRIKO.

YOU HAD FRIENDS --
-- WHEN YOU LIVED OUTSIDE, RIGHT?
NO... I'M SORRY FOR EARLIER.
I'M NOT GOOD WITH THOSE KINDS OF SITUATIONS
BESIDES, I DON'T KNOW HIM VERY WELL.
YES, AT THE LAST PLACE I LIVED.
BEFORE THAT, I NEVER STAYED LONG ENOUGH IN ONE PLACE TO MAKE ANY FRIENDS.
WHEN YOU WERE HERE, YOU AND MAKI WERE FRIENDS, RIGHT?
YES --

WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THAT BOOK, COULD I BORROW IT?
HE WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO EVER SPEAK TO ME OUTSIDE OF CLASS
HE'S PROBABLY THE FIRST FRIEND I EVER HAD.
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE REMEMBERS.
I SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
..
IT'S NOTHING.
OTHERWISE HE WOULDN'T HAVE REMEMBERED YOU SO QUICKLY.
I'M SURE MAKI TREASURED HIS MEMORIES OF YOU, KIRIKO.
TO THINK THAT I, TOO, KNEW YOU ONCE...
ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID THE OTHER TIME ..
THE MAN WHO TOOK CARE OF YOU...
WHO IS HE?

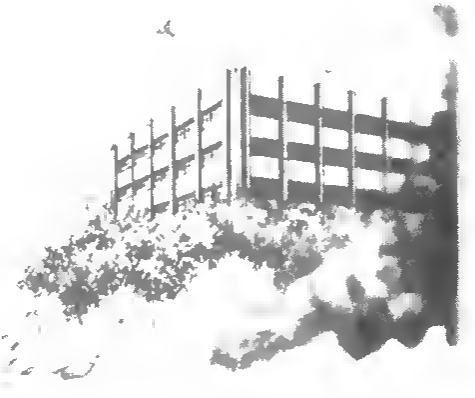

I'M NOT SURE WHICH ONE OF THOSE...
SAVIOR..
FATHER..
BIG BROTHER... FRIEND.
THIS MAN..
JUST WHAT IS HE TO YOU?
BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH --
-- I HATE HIM WITH A PASSION.
THE TRUTH IS, IN HERE WE'RE PROTECTED AGAINST BOTH THE GOOD AND THE BAD.
HI?
...?
THE OUTSIDE WORLD ISN'T MADE OF ONLY JOY
SURE, WE'RE CONDITIONED AND MONITORED, BUT AT LEAST WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

BY THEN, WE WILL HAVE LOST ANY HUMAN FEELINGS, BUT OUR SOCIAL STANDING WILL BE GUARANTEED
IF WE MANAGE TO GRADUATE WITHOUT INCIDENT, WE'LL BE SHELTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OR BY OUR COMPANY, OF WHICH WE'LL BE PERFECT LITTLE PUPPETS.
WE MIGHT EVEN BE HAPPY.
-- WE WON'T EVEN BE AWARE THAT WE'RE PUPPETS ANYMORE
AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS --
BUT I STILL WANT TO LEAVE.
I KNOW. . .
THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS SCARY, TOO.
BECAUSE NOW THAT WE *KNOW* THE TRUTH --
-- WE CAN'T IGNORE IT ANYMORE.

AFTER ALL, IF I STAY HERE, I WON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THOSE STUPID FEELINGS
..
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT'S BEST ..
SURELY YOU THINK THE SAME WAY TOO, RIGHT, KIRIKO?
THIS IS THE NOVEL I WROTE.
WE DON'T TAKE THOSE PILLS ANYMORE.
THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL FORGET YOU
I JUST WANT YOU TO HOLD ON TO IT..
SO THAT YOU WON'T FORGET ME
YOU DON'T REALLY HAVE TO READ IT.

NATSUME... THERE'S ALWAYS THE CHANCE THAT WE'LL MEET EACH OTHER AGAIN.
THAT'S RIGHT WE PLAN TO ESCAPE FROM HERE SOONER OR LATER, TOO.
YEAH... BUT...
JUST IN CASE...
THEN WE'LL COME SEE YOU.
WE'LL GET OUT OF HERE, NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS IT TAKES
OH, RIGHT!
I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO GIVE YOU.
YEAH!

IT'S A MAP.
A MAP...?
THERE'S ANOTHER SECRET PLACE.



Chapter 3
逃走
ESCAPE #1

チャッ
DID YOU SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT?

PLEASE LIE DOWN.
WE'RE GOING TO PUT YOU TO SLEEP --
-- DURING THE TEST.
NO, NOT REALLY. .
THIS IS THE SAME KIND OF CHECKUP YOU HAVE EVERY MONTH AT SCHOOL.
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID.
RELAX.
YOU'LL GO TO SLEEP IN A MOMENT.

I DON'T WANT TO ..
...
DON'T WORRY
YOU'RE LUCKY.

HOW UNUSUAL FOR YOU TO CALL ME.
I GOT NEWS
THE SCHOOL'S SUPPOSED TO RELEASE A PUPIL SOON

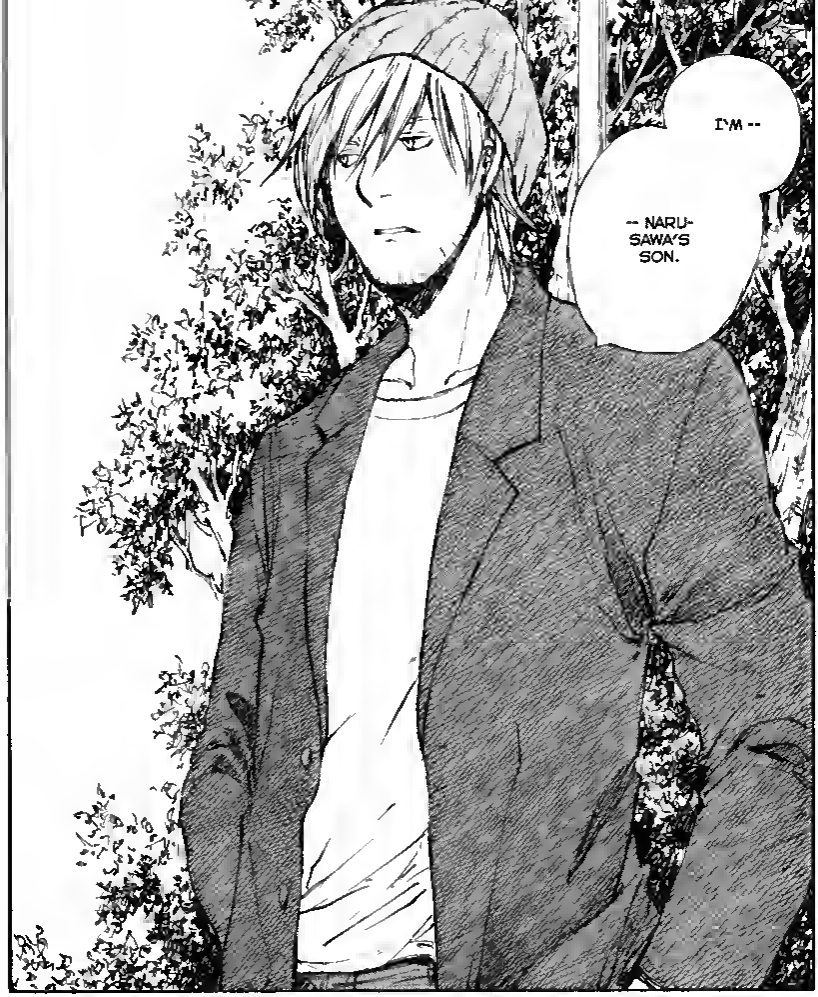
APPARENTLY, HE'S THE SON OF A POLITICIAN WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE SCHOOL.
IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RETURN OF HIS SON, HE WILL KEEP THAT KNOWLEDGE TO HIMSELF.
YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT KIRIKO IF YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH THE BOY.
WHAT'S THE POINT? THEY'RE GOING TO ERASE HIS MEMORIES ANYWAY.
YOU KNOW THEIR METHODS AS WELL AS I DO.
THEY ALTERED MY MEMORIES...
YOU'RE RIGHT...

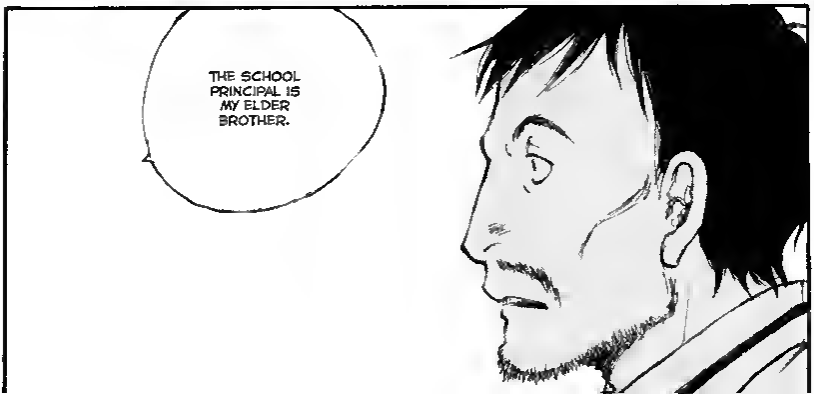
SILENTLY CARRYING OUT THE JOB I'D BEEN GIVEN WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE ME HAPPY.
I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A THOUGHT FOR ANYTHING ELSE.
AFTER I GRADUATED FROM THAT SCHOOL ··
-- I WORKED FOR NARUSAWA PHARMACEUTICALS, WHO GAVE ME A NEW HOUSE, A NEW IDENTITY AND NEW MEMORIES AS WELL
DRUGS TO SUPPRESS NEGATIVE THOUGHTS CAUSED BY THE FAKE MEMORIES. .
OTHERS TO MAKE CERTAIN PEOPLE EASIER TO MANIPU-LATE...
THAT'S THE KIND OF STUFF THEY PRODUCE.
WHEN I FOUND OUT ··
-- I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
ONCE I REALIZED THAT MY WHOLE LIFE WAS A LIE, EVERYTHING I BELIEVED IN UNTIL THEN JUST CRUMBLED

IT SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME
THAT'S WHEN I RAN AWAY.
I THEN RAN AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL.
I WAS TWELVE WHEN I FOUND OUT.

WHO WOULD BELIEVE SUCH A RIDICULOUS STORY?
IF SOME NOBODY WERE TO TALK ABOUT IT HE'D BE PEGGED AS A NUT AND THAT WOULD BE THE END OF IT.
YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE EVER TOLD THIS.
I'M... STILL SCARED I MEAN, I KNOW THE COMPANY'S SECRETS. WHAT IF THEY FIND ME AND ELIMINATE ME?
THINK ABOUT IT.
EVEN IF THEY DO FIND YOU, THEY WON'T ELIMINATE YOU
THEY WON'T FIND YOU AS LONG AS YOU KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN
THAT'S RIGHT
WE AREN'T QUITE THE FIGHTERS FOR JUSTICE.
I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT WHAT THE COMPANY DOES
I DON'T EVEN THINK OF IT.
DO YOU WANT TO GET EVEN WITH THE COMPANY BY EXPOSING THEIR SECRETS?

I JUST WANT THEM TO STOP SCREWING WITH MY LIFE.
I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THEM EVER AGAIN.
NARUSAWA IS LOOKING FOR YOU.
BUT...
WHAT?
NARUSAWA ISN'T LOOKING FOR ME TO ELIMINATE ME.
YEAH...
THEY WANT ME TO HELP THEM.
"YEAH"? THAT'S ALL?


I'M --
-- NARU-SAWA'S SON.


THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IS MY ELDER BROTHER.

THEY BROUGHT KIRIKO BACK BECAUSE THEY FOUND OUT THAT SHE LIVED WITH ME.

YOU MIGHT SAY SHE'S BEING HELD HOSTAGE

THEY'RE STILL WATCHING ME
DON'T TALK TO ME WHILE IN THE SCHOOL.

DON'T TALK TO ME.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT BOTHERS ME WHILE I'M READING.
THEN.
CAN I READ BESIDE YOU?

I WONDER —
— WHAT KIND OF LIFE KIRIKO HAD OUTSIDE?
ザワ
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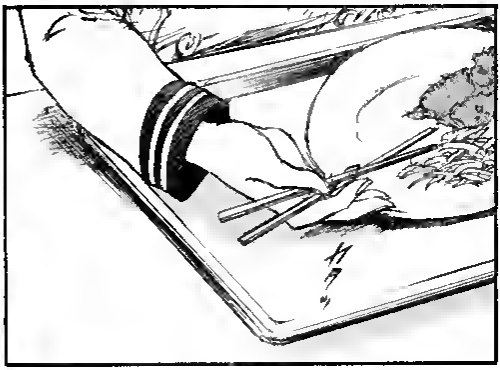
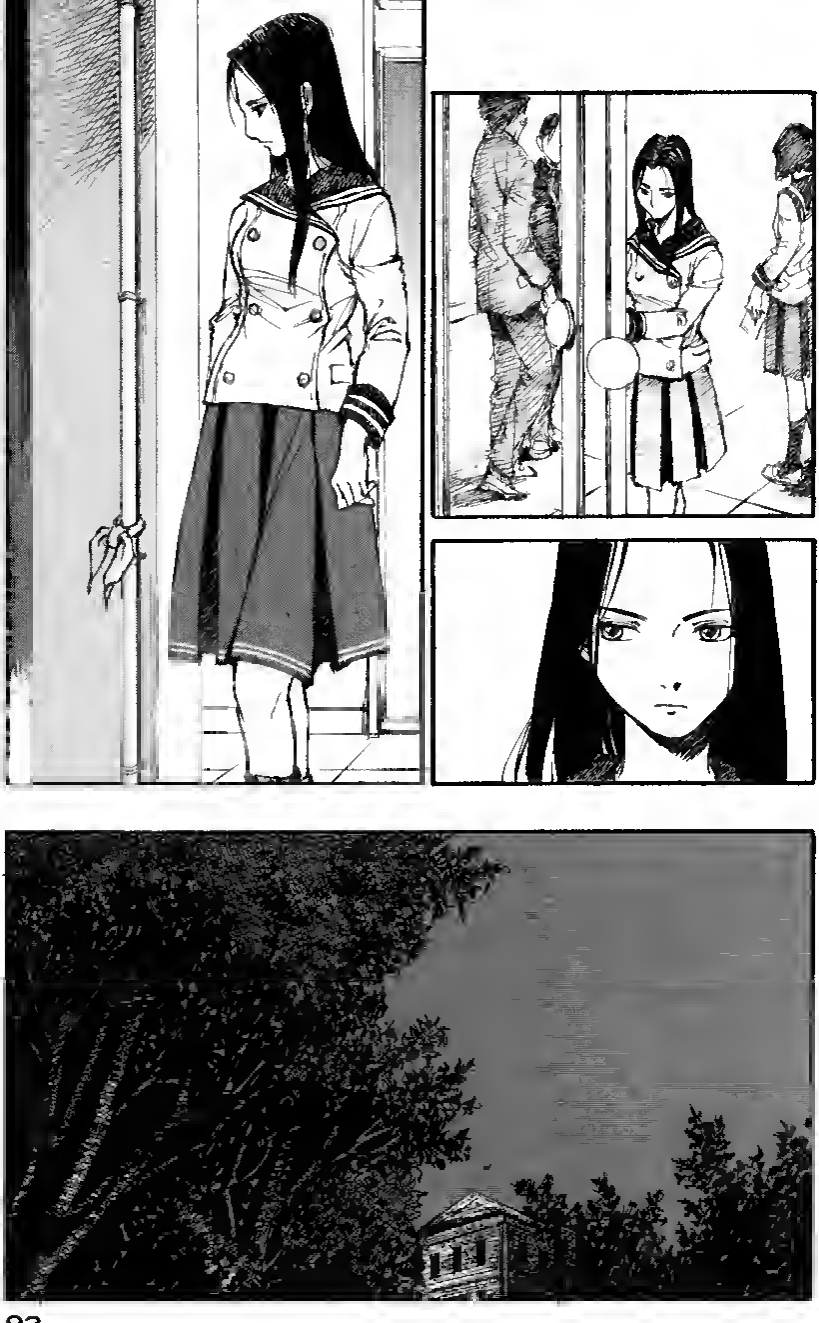
THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE...
WE'D BEEN TOGETHER FOR AS LONG AS WE COULD REMEMBER...



YEAH...
THIS IS NOT LIKE WHEN HE WAS IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE.

I MISS HAVING NATSUME AROUND.

TRUE.



THIS IS THE MAP NATSUME GAVE US.
HE SAID THERE WAS ANOTHER SECRET PLACE
THE MAP'S PRETTY ROUGH.
WHEN DID HE FIND IT?
THE SCHOOLHOUSE IS HERE. THEN THIS SQUARE MUST BE THE BUILDING WE ARE IN.
WOODS
ISN'T THAT WHERE THE CLIFF IS?
LOOKS LIKE IT'S MARKED BY THIS RED CROSS.

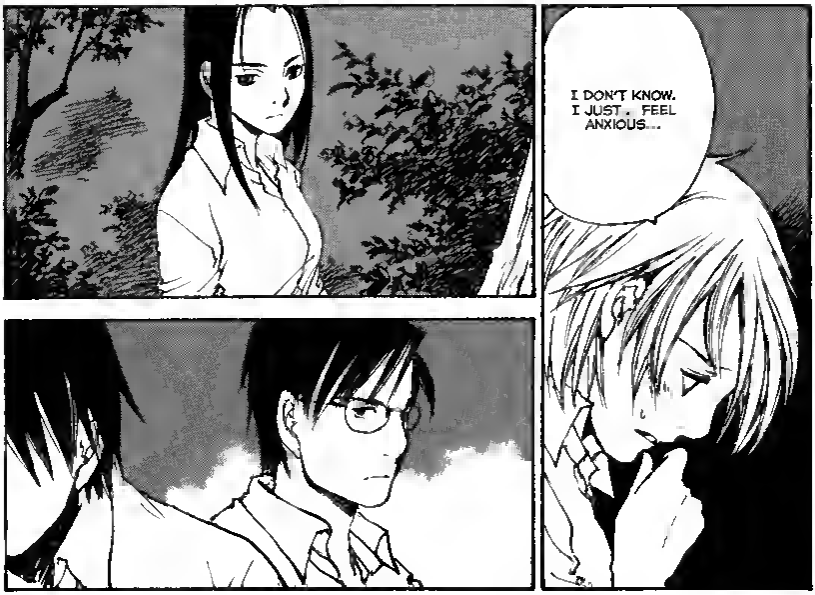
BUT THERE'S NOTHING AROUND THERE.
INDEED... NO BUILDINGS OF ANY KIND.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
BELOW IT IS THE SEA.
LET'S GO FIND OUT.

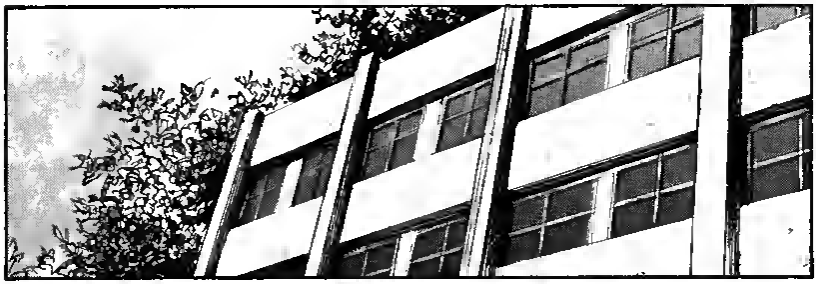
WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO FIND HERE?

Chapter3 逃走 #2
ESCAPE

IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE ANYTHING LET'S COME BACK AT DAYTIME.
RIGHT.
THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE
YEAH...
カサ
!

MAKI..
MEI WAS WORRIED
I TOLD YOU YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME.
WE JUST WENT TO TAKE A LOOK .. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THERE
WHAT'S WRONG, MEI...?


I DON'T KNOW. I JUST. FEEL ANXIOUS...

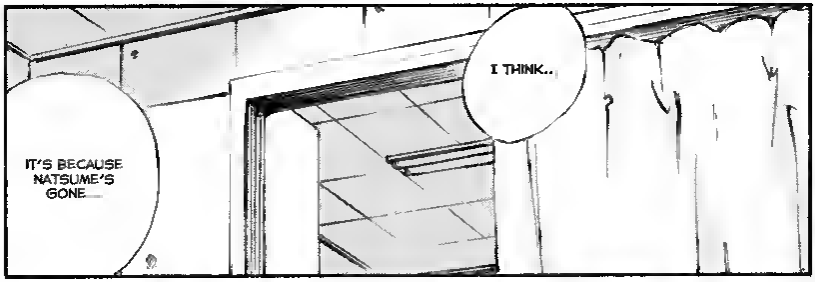


ギャッ
ブオオ
TODAY IS
THE DAY...

I SUPPOSE SO...
YOU THINK HE'S GONE ALREADY?
IF WE COULD MANAGE TO SKIP CLASS WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION...
LIKE PRETENDING TO BE SICK?
ME TOO.
BUT IT'S NOT EASY TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL BUILDING DURING THE DAY.
保健室
I WANT TO GO CHECK OUT THAT PLACE ONE MORE TIME.

MEI.
MAKI...
RYO.
TODAY...
IT'S NOT MY USUAL ANEMIA...
I HEARD YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO CLASS SINCE MORNING.
YEAH... BUT I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW...
I'LL GO THIS AFTERNOON.

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...
I FEEL VERY UNEASY.
AND IT AFFECTS MY HEALTH...


I THINK...
IT'S BECAUSE NATSUME'S GONE...

ME!...
I KEEP TELLING MYSELF --
-- THAT OUR LITTLE CIRCLE IS SLOWLY BREAKING APART.

OK THEN
TAKE IT EASY.
I'M FINE. YOU BOTH CAN LEAVE.
IT'S LUNCH HOUR GO ON, OR ELSE YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO EAT.
YEAH ..
I KNOW THAT'S NOT THE CASE...
DON'T WORRY I'LL CALM DOWN AFTER A WHILE...
MAKI...

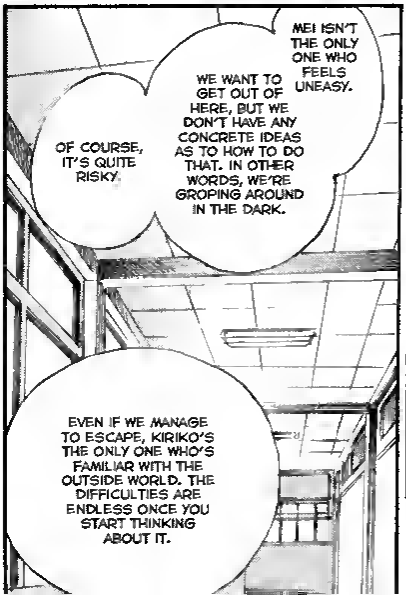
WHAT IS IT?
YOU --
-- WOULDN'T LEAVE ME BEHIND, WOULD YOU?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MEI?
ガラ
OF COURSE NOT.

MEI'S POOR HEALTH IS MOST LIKELY CAUSED BY THOSE DRUGS.
YEAH...
IT'S NOT ONLY HER BODY.
HER MIND IS FRAGILE, TOO.
SHE'S SHOOK UP BY WHAT HAPPENED TO NATSUME.
THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING.
SOMETHING HAS BEEN FRIGHTENING HER --
-- EVER SINCE KIRIKO HINATSU APPEARED.
BUT THEY'RE GETTING ALONG WELL.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.

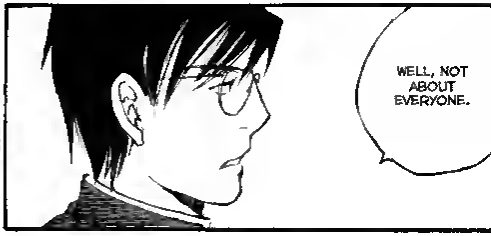
IF I HADN'T, WE'D NEVER HAVE LEARNED THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS SCHOOL.
...?
WHY SHOULD IT UPSET HER?

IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE TAKING AN INTEREST IN KIRIKO.

I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND IT...
AND I THINK NEITHER DOES MEI...

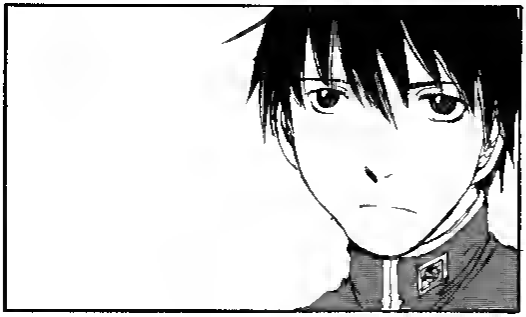

MEI ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS UNEASY.
WE WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY CONCRETE IDEAS AS TO HOW TO DO THAT. IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE GROPING AROUND IN THE DARK.
OF COURSE, IT'S QUITE RISKY.
EVEN IF WE MANAGE TO ESCAPE, KIRIKO'S THE ONLY ONE WHO'S FAMILIAR WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THE DIFFICULTIES ARE ENDLESS ONCE YOU START THINKING ABOUT IT.

YOU CAN TELL ALL THAT?


WELL, NOT ABOUT EVERYONE.

FOR NOW, LET'S JUST THINK ABOUT HOW TO GET OUT OF HERE.
FIRST, WE NEED TO GO CHECK OUT THE PLACE NATSUME TALKED ABOUT. IF IT LOOKS USABLE WE CAN GO FROM THERE.

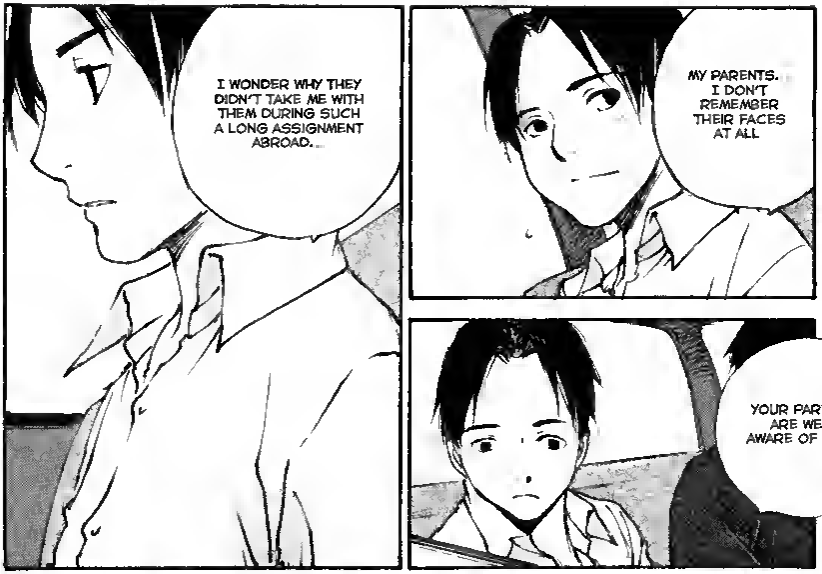
BUT...
WHATEVER HAPPENS, IT'LL STILL BE BETTER THAN STAYING HERE.



NATSUME.

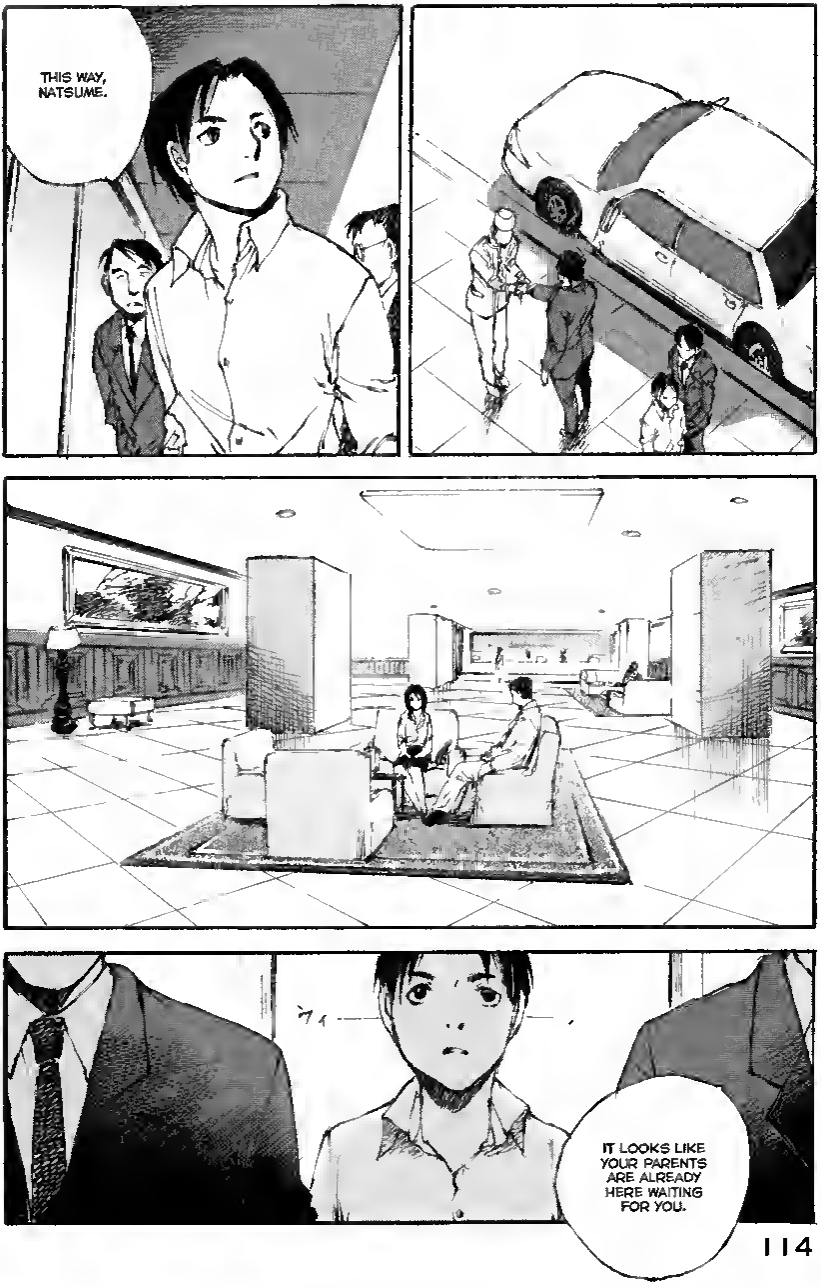
ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL?
NO. .
UH... YES?
NATSUME.

YOUR PARENTS WILL PROBABLY BE SURPRISED TO SEE HOW MUCH YOU HAVE GROWN UP.
IT'S BEEN 14 YEARS, AFTER ALL
I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE SCENERY. .
WONDERING IF I RECOGNIZED IT.
YOU WERE ENTRUSTED TO OUR SCHOOL WHEN YOU WERE STILL A LITTLE CHILD.
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT YOU CAN'T REMEMBER

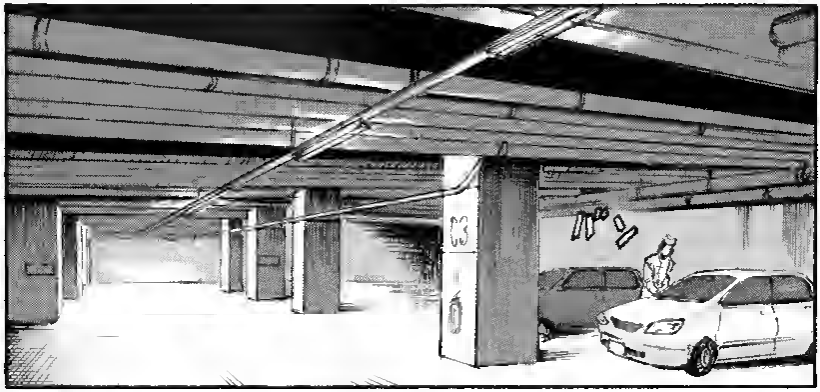

I WONDER WHY THEY DIDN'T TAKE ME WITH THEM DURING SUCH A LONG ASSIGNMENT ABROAD...
MY PARENTS. I DON'T REMEMBER THEIR FACES AT ALL
YOUR PARENTS ARE WELL AWARE OF THAT

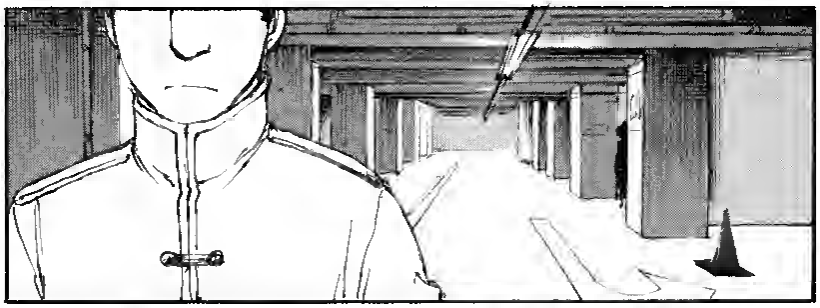
THEY ENTRUSTED YOU TO US FOR YOUR OWN GOOD
IS THAT SO...?
I HEARD YOUR MOTHER WAS SICK A LOT AT THE TIME, SO THEY DECIDED THAT SHE WOULD BE UNABLE TO RAISE A CHILD IN AN UNFAMILIAR FOREIGN COUNTRY

I SEE.
IT'S A ONE-OF-A-KIND SCHOOL
YOU WERE VERY LUCKY.
OUR SCHOOL PROVIDES AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT
YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT USELESS THINGS AND FOCUS ON YOUR STUDIES THERE


THIS WAY, NATSUME.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR PARENTS ARE ALREADY HERE WAITING FOR YOU.

NATSUME
...!





Chapter 3 逃走 #3
ESCAPE

ARE YOU FEELING BETTER --
-- MS. SONO-KURA?
ナラ
YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR THE LESSONS YOU MISSED.
Y-YES... I'LL GO TO THE AFTERNOON CLASSES.
SEE YOU
I KNOW...
THAT'S GOOD.

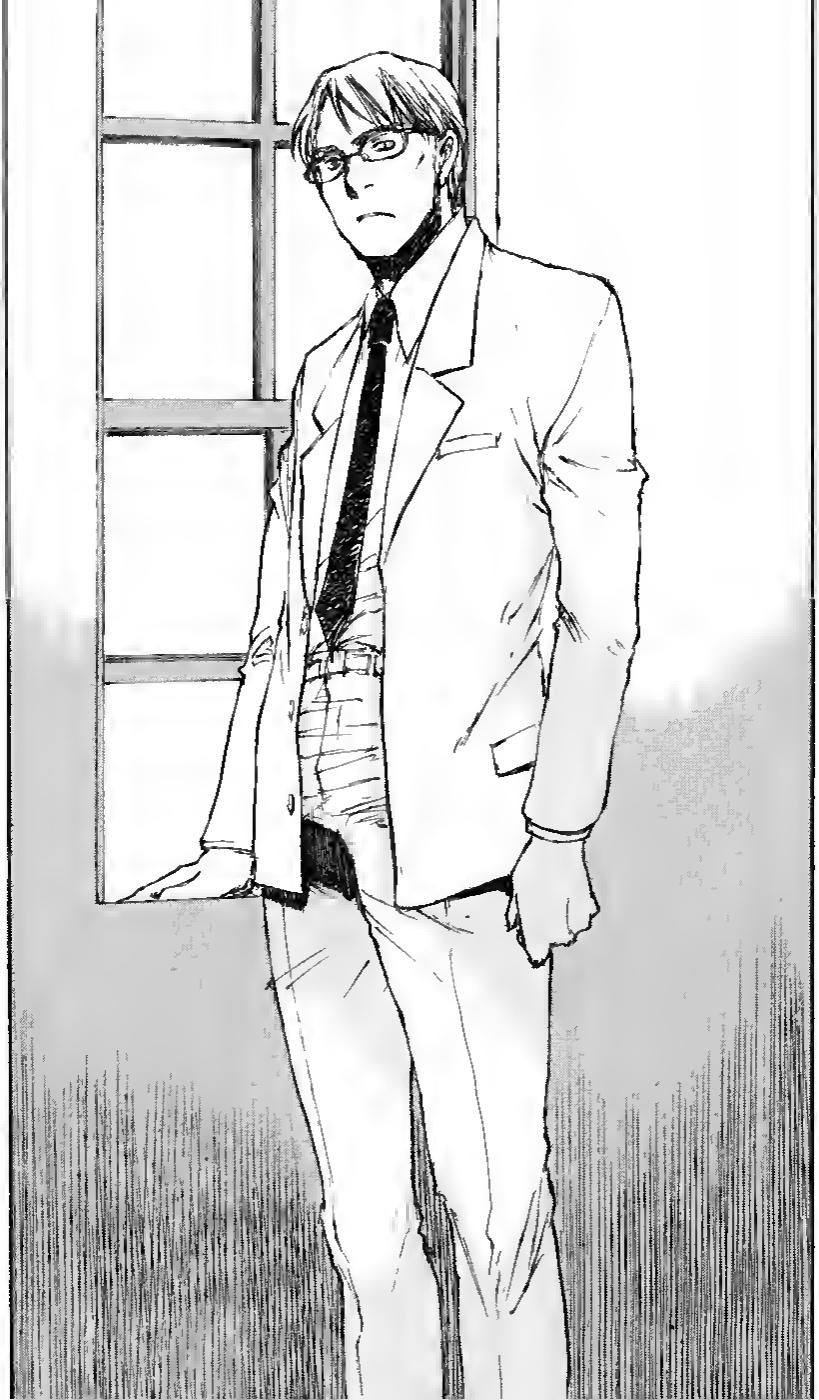
SHOW ME WHAT'S IN YOUR POCKET.
MS. SONOKURA, WAIT A MINUTE.
YES?
YOUR JACKET POCKET.
YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING IN THERE, RIGHT?
WH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HUH .?

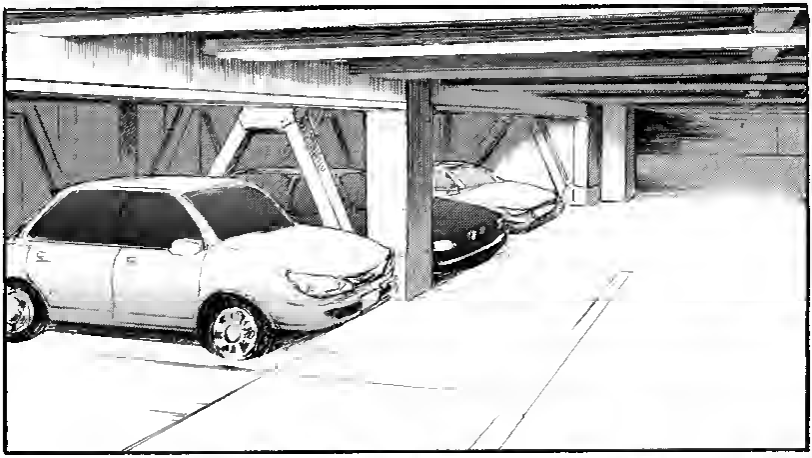
LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE..
THE MEDICINE I GAVE YOU EARLIER?
TH-THERE'S NOTHING IN MY POCKET
EXCUSE ME

…
ぎゅ
カチ

THE DELIVERY WENT WITHOUT INCIDENT.
WHAT ABOUT THE BOY?
THIS MATTER IS CLOSED. I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF KEEPING IN TOUCH FROM NOW ON. TELL THEM THAT THE SAME IS EXPECTED FROM THEM, TOO.
IT WOULD ONLY BE TROUBLESOME FOR US IF WE ACCEPTED IT.
IT SEEMS HE ACCEPTED IT WITHOUT SUSPECTING ANYTHING.
ALSO, HIS PARENTS SAID THAT THEY WANTED TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE SCHOOL, BY PAYING HIS TUITION FEES FOR THE PAST YEARS.

{knock knock}
THAT'S ALL
AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...
MAKE SURE THAT THEY DON'T GET TOO COMPLACENT.
SIR, PLEASE GET READY TO LEAVE
YOUR FATHER'S HAD A BREAKDOWN.
MY FATHER?





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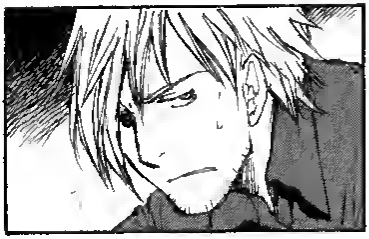
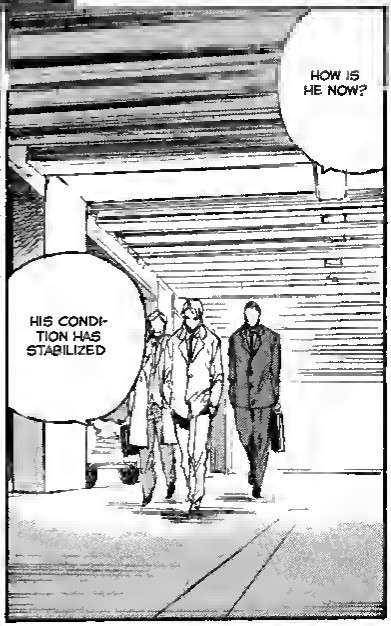


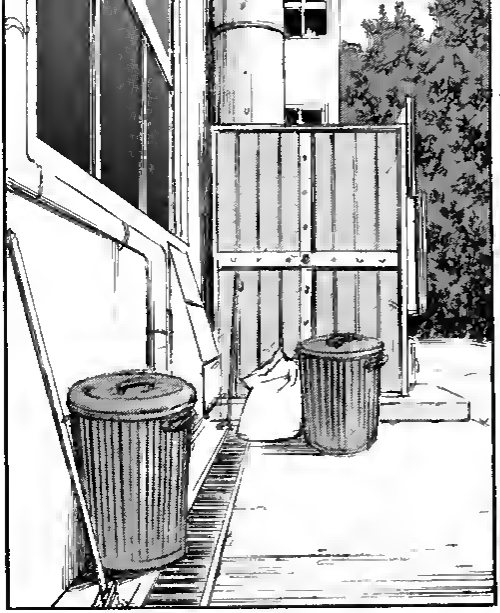
SOMEONE IS COMING

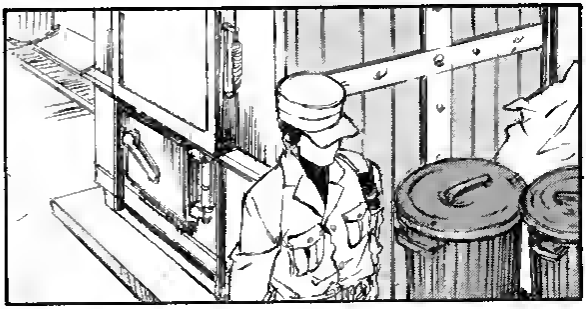
I FEEL DIZZY.
SHIT...

MAYUMI ---?

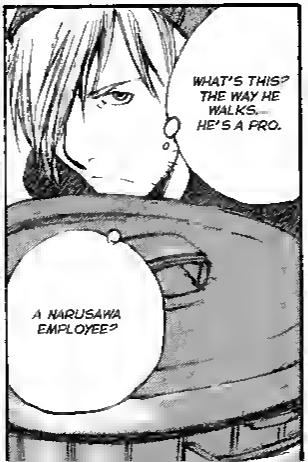

HOW IS HE NOW?
HIS CONDI-TION HAS STABILIZED

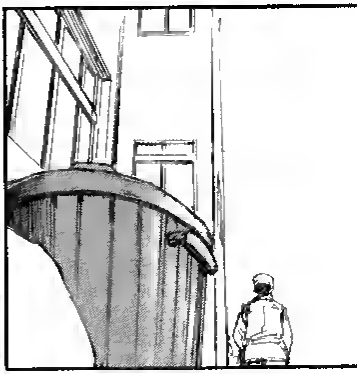
DID SOME-
THING
HAPPEN?
..



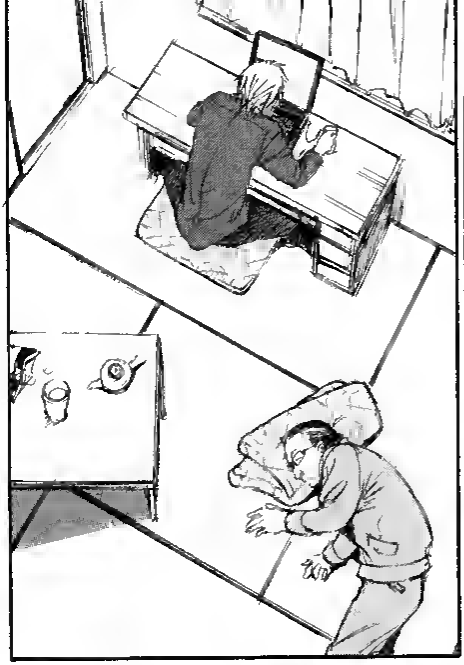


I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE IN A DIRECT CONFRONTATION.
THERE'S A LOT OF SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS INSIDE. BESIDES, THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE WATCHING.
GUESS I WON'T BE ABLE TO SNEAK ONTO THE CAMPUS AFTER ALL ..

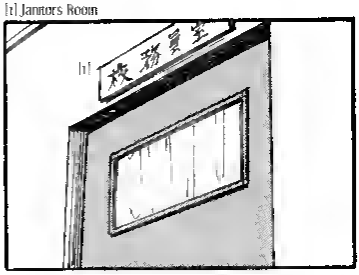

WHAT'S THIS? THE WAY HE WALKS... HE'S A PRO.
A NARUSAWA EMPLOYEE?



I'LL WAIT TILL IT GETS DARK
EITHER WAY, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO RIGHT NOW
WHICH MEANS I HAVE TO MAKE KIRIKO COME OUT TO ME.
BUT HOW DO I FIND HER?
!
WHO ARE YOU?
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
HUH..?

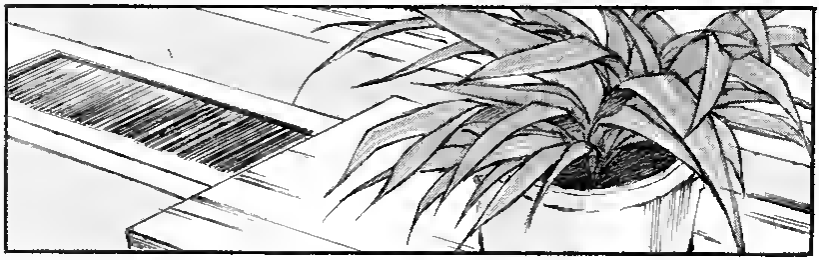


[t] Janitors Room



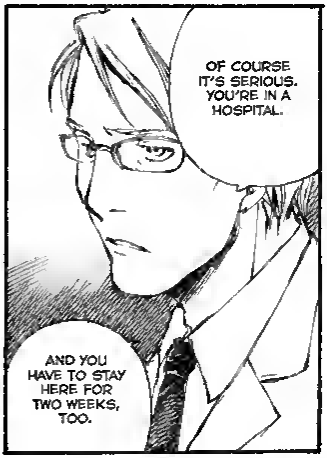
MAYUMI ---
THIS PLACE STILL LOOKS THE SAME.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I USED TO LIVE HERE ONCE.
HE'S WEARING A SUIT... I GUESS HE'S PROBABLY THE FUTURE PRESIDENT NOW...
NOW LISTEN, NAGI.
WE'RE BEING TESTED.

THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS PLACE IS AN EXPERIMENTAL FACILITY.
THE ONE OF US WITH THE HIGHEST ABILITIES SHALL INHERIT THE COMPANY.
THEY SAY THAT OUR WHITE HAIR IS A SIDE EFFECT OF THE DRUGS AS WELL.
IT SEEMS THE SIDE EFFECTS VARY WITH EACH PERSON THOUGH.
IF YOU HATE IT HERE SO MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU JUST LEAVE?
I WON'T STOP YOU.

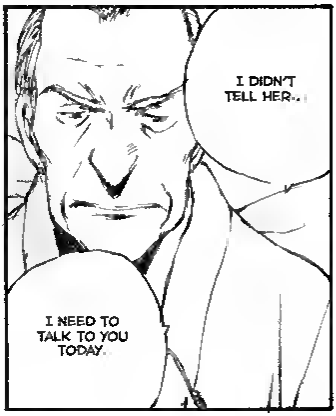


SORRY FOR MAKING YOU COME ALL THE WAY HERE.
IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS

MINOKIDA SIMPLY WENT OVERBOARD WITH THE CHECKUP PROGRAM.
IT'S ONLY FOR A CHECKUP. I TOLD YOU I WAS FINE.


OF COURSE IT'S SERIOUS. YOU'RE IN A HOSPITAL.
AND YOU HAVE TO STAY HERE FOR TWO WEEKS, TOO.

YOU SHOULDN'T TALK!
A CAREFUL EXAMINATION IS NECESSARY IN YOUR STATE. YOU'RE NOT THE YOUNGEST ANYMORE
I CERTAINLY DID NOT, MR PRESIDENT


I DIDN'T TELL HER..
I NEED TO TALK TO YOU TODAY.

WHAT ABOUT YUKO?

110
A-1

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?
NO...
HIS WHEREABOUTS ARE STILL UNKNOWN.
WE BROUGHT BACK THE GIRL WHO LIVED WITH HIM JUST LIKE YOU TOLD US...
ANY NEWS ON NAGI?
...
I SEE...
LEAVING THE COMPANY TO ME ALONE IS WHAT WORRIES YOU, ISN'T IT?
IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO ENTRUST THE COMPANY'S MANAGEMENT TO YOU, SHOULD SOMETHING HAPPEN TO ME.

HE ABANDONED US
EVEN IF WE BRING HIM BACK BY FORCE, HE WON'T SUBMIT.
FATHER
I CAN RUN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMPANY ALL BY MYSELF, EVEN IF WE DON'T BRING BACK NAGI.
WE WILL MAKE HIM.
-- THEN SO BE IT
IF YOU SAY SO --

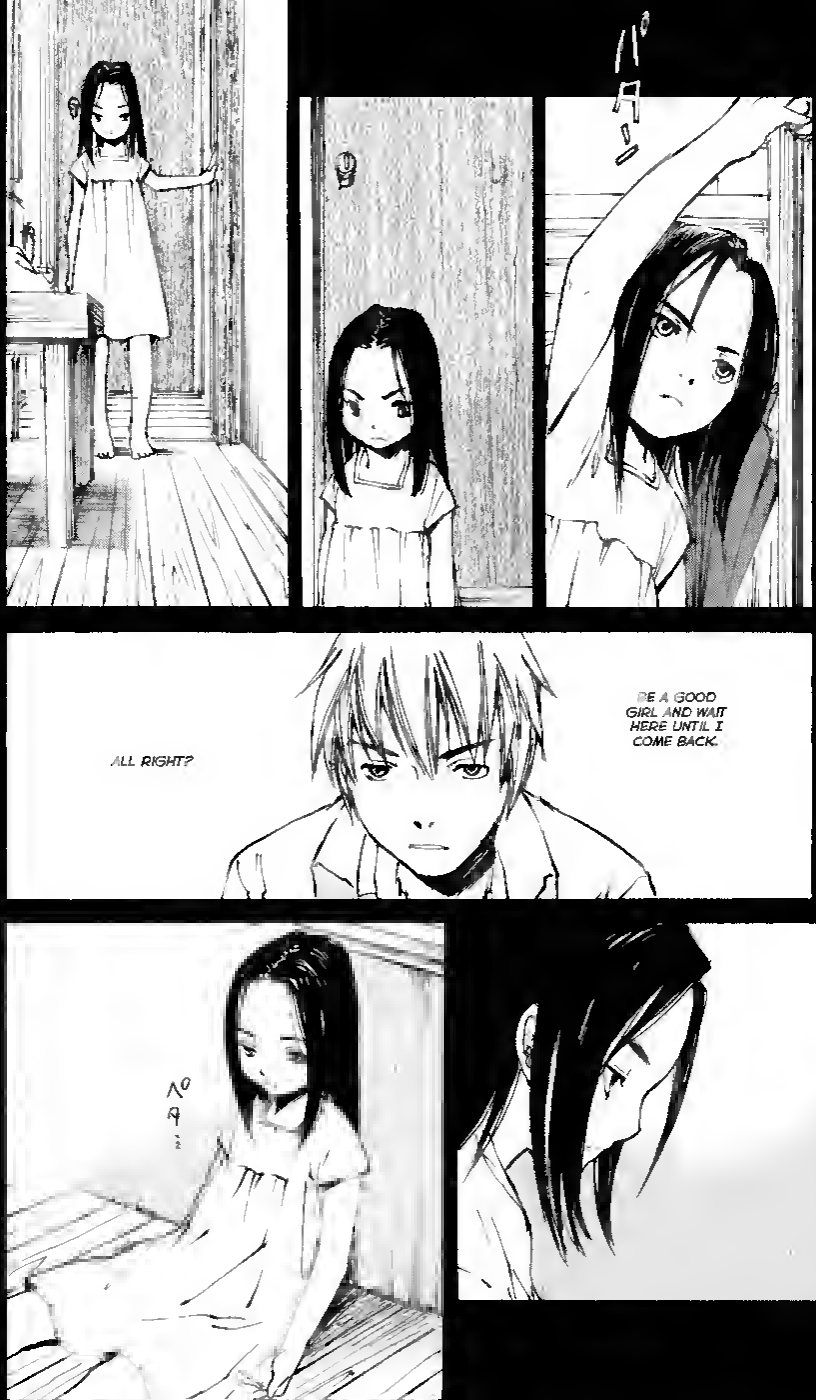
Chapter 3

逃走

#4 ESCAPE

ruuumble

カチャ
DON'T GO OUTSIDE.
カチャ


パパー
BE A GOOD GIRL AND WAIT HERE UNTIL I COME BACK.
ALL RIGHT?
パパ?

* Bread roll with fried noodle and red ginger filling

[1] Kimura Bakery

CALM DOWN!
sniff sniff
I'M SORRY.

ANOTHER DREAM FROM THE PAST...
DARN... I FELL ASLEEP IN MY UNIFORM.
I'VE BEEN HAVING A LOT OF THEM SINCE MY MEMORIES STARTED COMING BACK.
IT'S AS IF MY BRAIN IS REPAIRING ITSELF.

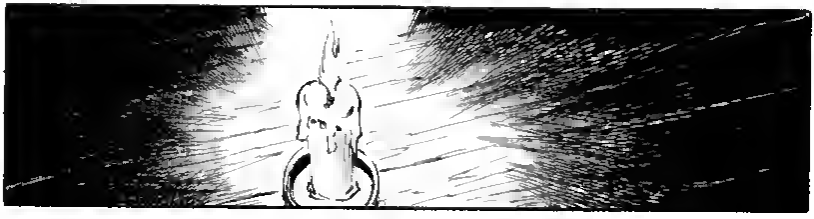
HE'S PROBABLY GLAD THAT I'M NO LONGER THERE ANY-- MORE---
I KNEW THAT I BECAME A BURDEN TO HIM..
NAGI... IS HE WAITING FOR ME TO COME BACK?
{knock knock}
{knock knock}
KIRIKO?
BUT...
I'LL COME BACK TO NAGI --
-- NO MATTER WHAT.

YOU WEREN'T AT DINNER TONIGHT. WHAT HAPPENED?
I'M TURNING OFF THE LIGHT.
MEI...
I FELL ASLEEP... WHAT TIME IS IT?
IT'S AFTER TEN, JUST AFTER LIGHTS OUT.
I'M NOT GOING TO GO THERE ANYMORE
SINCE YOU DIDN'T COME TO THE CAFETERIA, I ASSUMED YOU DIDN'T SEE THE HANDKERCHIEF, SO I CAME TO PICK YOU UP.

WE'RE THINKING ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME
BUT... THIS IS ALL NEW TO US...
BECAUSE ALL WE DO IS MEET WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONCRETE PLAN THAT'S POINTLESS
WHY NOT?
B-BUT.. WITH US ON OUR OWN...
BESIDES .. I'M BEING WATCHED.
LOOK, I'VE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER I'M THERE OR NOT. IN FACT...
YOU WOULD BE SAFER *WITHOUT* ME... YOU SEE, I...
IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU NOT TO BE SEEN WITH ME

WHAT I MEAN IS THAT IT'LL BE NECESSARY TO TAKE A LOT OF RISKS.
IT'LL BE A LOT EASIER FOR ONE PERSON TO GET AWAY THAN FOR A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO ESCAPE
SO DO WE!
I... WANT TO LEAVE THIS PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
NOT EXACTLY.
DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?
I MAY END UP USING THE SAME METHOD AS LAST TIME... ONLY THIS TIME I'LL CAUSE AN EVEN BIGGER COMMOTION.
D-DON'T BE RECKLESS.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THEY'D DO TO YOU IF THEY CAUGHT YOU THIS TIME

IT MIGHT GO WELL IF I MANAGED TO ESCAPE TO THE NORTH FOREST USING THE UNDER-GROUND PASSAGE. I ALMOST MADE IT THE LAST TIME.
TELL THIS TO THE OTHERS
TELL THEM THAT FROM NOW ON, I NEED TO GO MY OWN WAY.

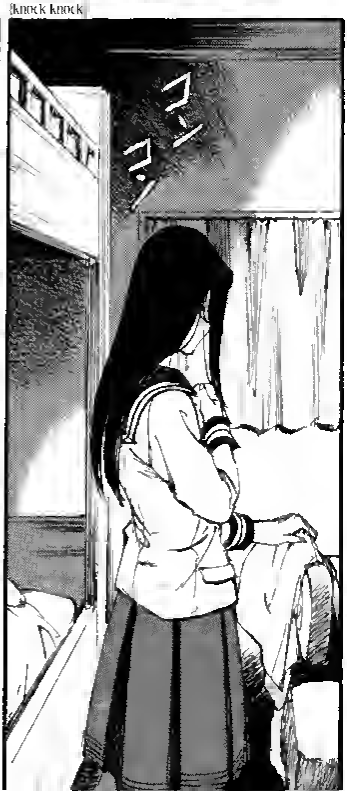


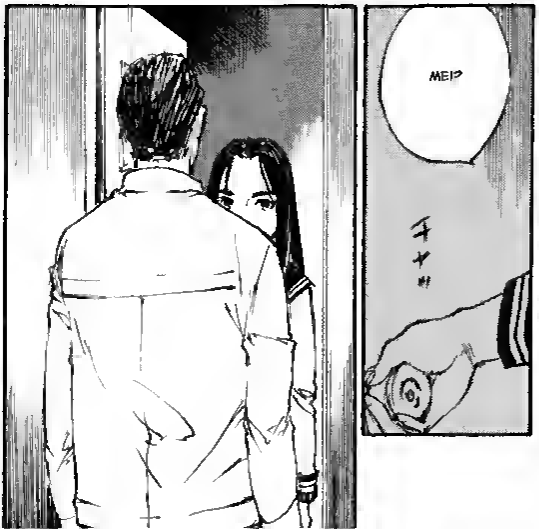
IT'S TRUE...
THERE'S CERTAINLY A RISK IN WORKING WITH HER...

I'LL SEE IF I CAN PERSUADE H—
WASN'T THAT CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING?
EVEN IF WE KEPT MEETING IT'D BE POINT-LESS
ISN'T THAT WHAT SHE SAID?
IT'S BETTER TO HAVE A LARGER NUMBER OF US, EVEN IF IT'S MORE RISKY.
I WONDER IF SHE'LL COME BACK...
IN OTHER WORDS, SHE THINKS SHE'LL BE MORE EFFICIENT BY HERSELF.
AS I SAID I'LL TRY TO..
SHE DIDN'T SAY IT FOR OUR SAKE, YOU KNOW...
BUT WE SHOULD TRY TO PERSUADE HER, ANYWAY.
!
IN THE END, SHE DOESN'T REALLY TRUST US...
OR RATHER, SHE THINKS SHE CAN'T *RELY* ON US.
BECAUSE IF SHE WERE TO BE CAUGHT AGAIN, SHE COULD TELL ON US THIS TIME.

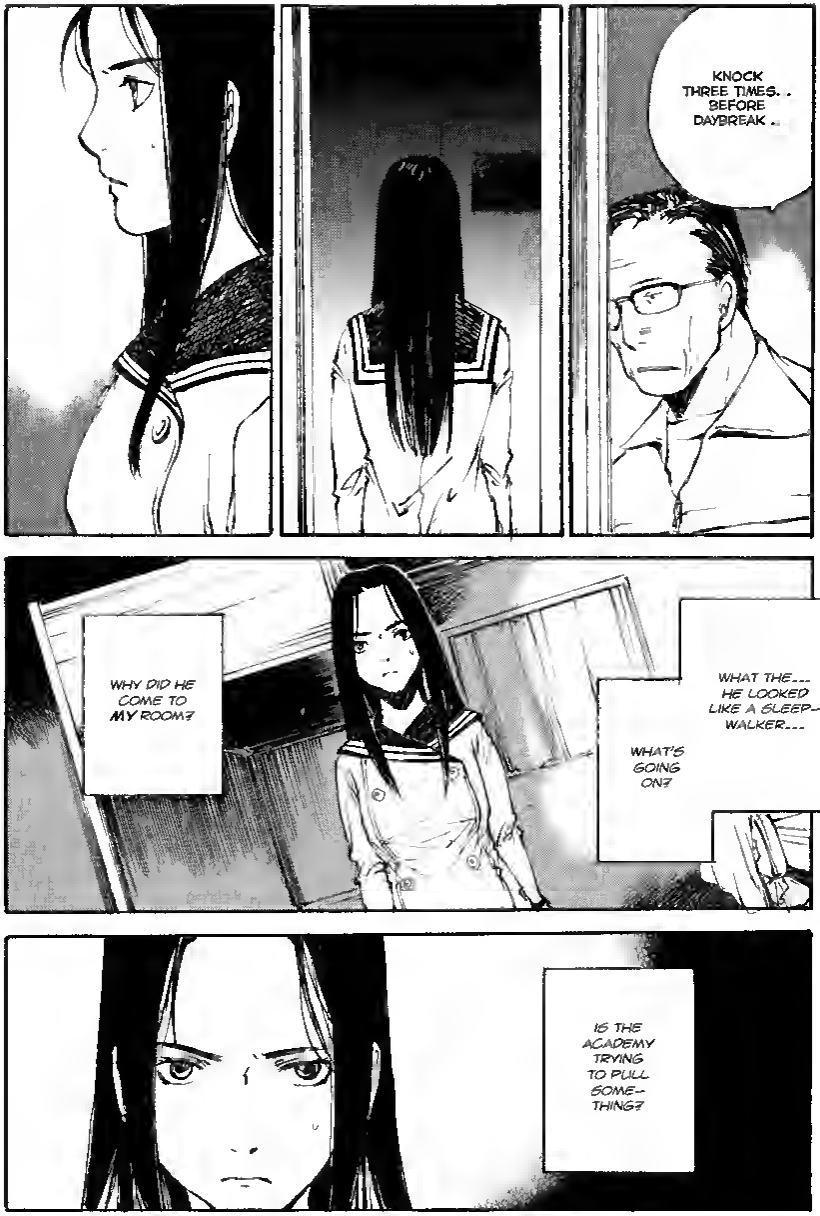
{knock knock}

{knock knock}

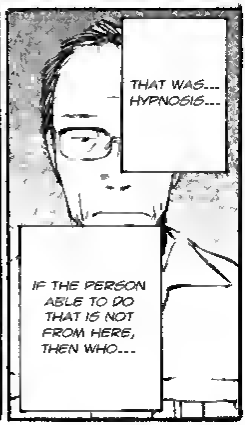


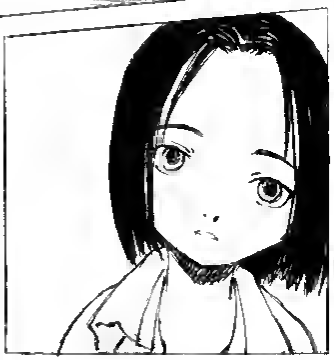


COME TO THE JANITOR'S ROOM.
THE JANITOR...?
DO YOU NEED SOME-THING?
IT'S PAST LIGHTS OUT, YOU KNOW.
COME TO THE JANITOR'S ROOM AND KNOCK THREE TIMES ON THE OUTSIDE DOOR. DON'T LET ANYBODY SEE YOU.
YOU MUST COME BEFORE DAYBREAK.
HUH...?

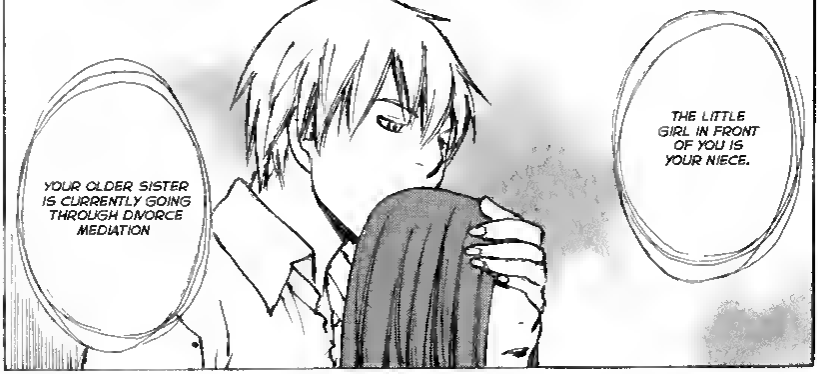

KNOCK THREE TIMES.. BEFORE DAYBREAK..
WHY DID HE COME TO MY ROOM?
WHAT THE... HE LOOKED LIKE A SLEEP-WALKER...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
IS THE ACADEMY TRYING TO PULL SOME-THING?

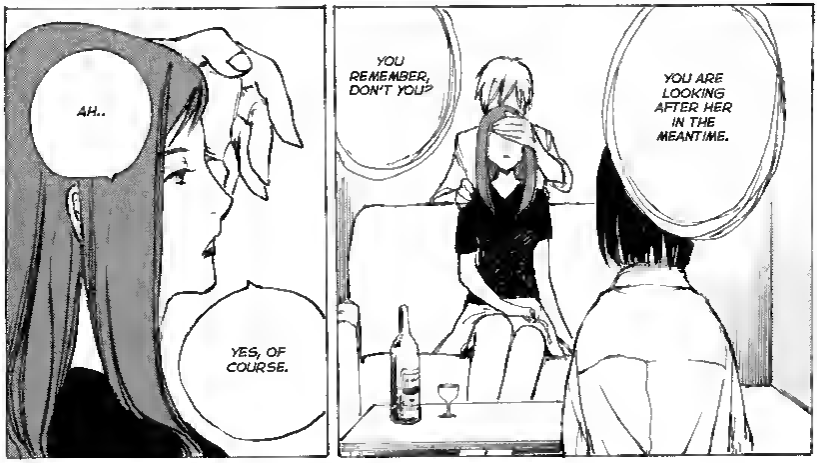
NO... IF THAT WAS THE CASE THEY WOULDN'T HAVE USED SOMEONE LIKE HIM.


THAT WAS... HYPNOSIS...
IF THE PERSON ABLE TO DO THAT IS NOT FROM HERE, THEN WHO...

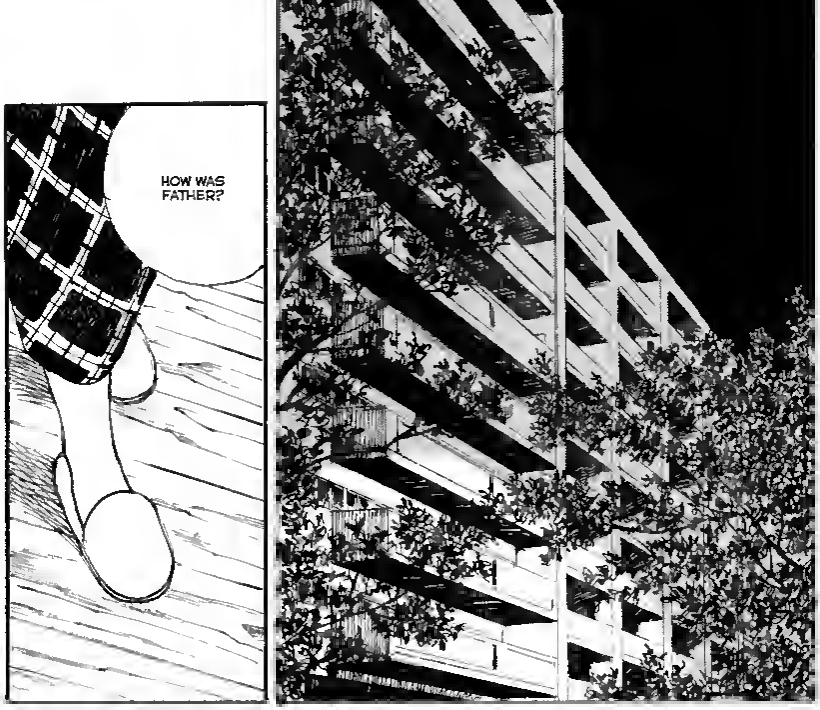


LISTEN ONLY TO THE SOUND OF MY VOICE.
COMPLETELY EMPTY YOUR MIND.


YOUR OLDER SISTER IS CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH DIVORCE MEDIATION
THE LITTLE GIRL IN FRONT OF YOU IS YOUR NIECE.


AH..
YES, OF COURSE.
YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU?
YOU ARE LOOKING AFTER HER IN THE MEANTIME.

Chapter 3
逃走 #5
ESCAPE

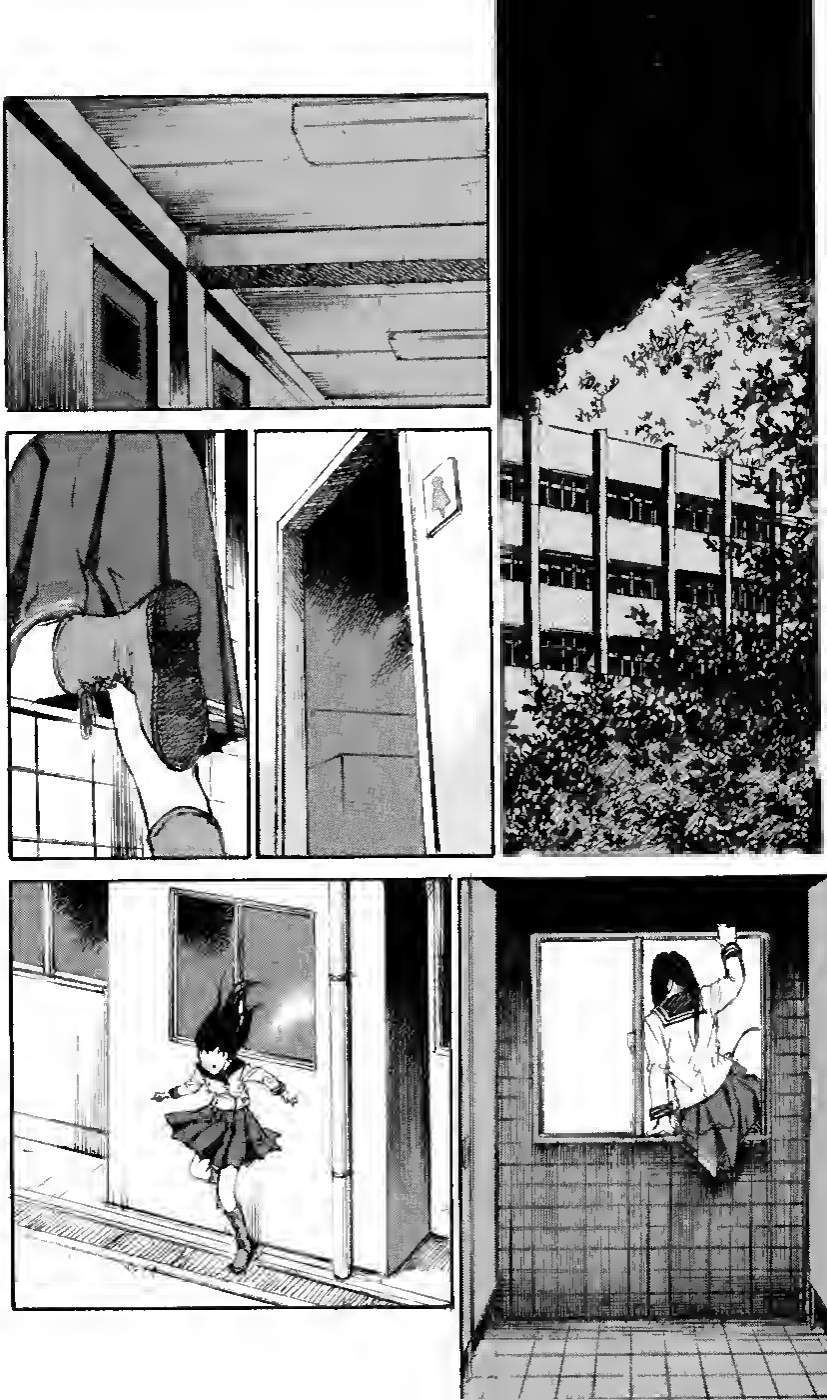

HOW WAS FATHER?

HE SEEMED WELL.
THEY SAY HE'LL STAY AT THE HOSPITAL FOR SOME TIME, FOR TESTS.
WELL... HE'S GETTING OLDER. THESE THINGS HAPPEN.

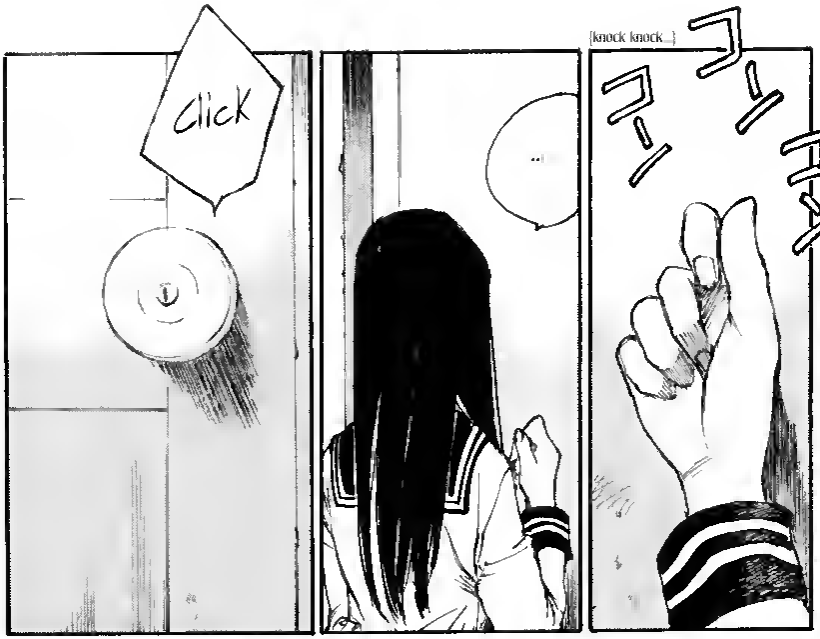
HE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
THE REASON HE CALLED ME WAS TO DISCUSS WORK.
YOU KNOW .. IN THE PAST, FATHER WOULD NEVER HAVE CALLED ANYONE, EVEN IF HE'D HAD A BREAKDOWN...
HE TOLD ME TO FIND NAGI NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES.
FATHER IS OBSESSED WITH NAGI.
HE APPOINTED ME AS HIS SUCCESSOR AGAINST HIS WILL.
..

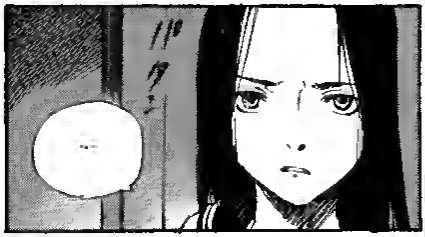
NO, IT'S MERELY BECAUSE NAGI WAS MORE TALENTED THAN ME.
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON
HMPH ..
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A MAN WHO'D PUT HIS OWN SONS IN AN EXPERIMENTAL FACILITY.
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE NAGI RESEMBLES YOUR LATE MOTHER
カチ
カチ
BUT HE DIDN'T TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOTHER
カチ
WELL ... HE SENT ME TO COLLEGE.
THAT'S BECAUSE --
-- MY MOTHER NEVER WANTED HIM TO

YOU'RE THE ONLY HONEST PERSON IN THE NARUSAWA FAMILY.
YUKO...
I'M ON YOUR SIDE, MAYUMI.
..
I'VE GOT PAPERS TO STUDY BEFORE TOMORROW.
YEAH. I'M HEADING BACK TO THE ACADEMY.
ARE YOU LEAVING?
THERE ARE NO SIDES.



Huff!


{knock knock...}
コーン コーン
Click



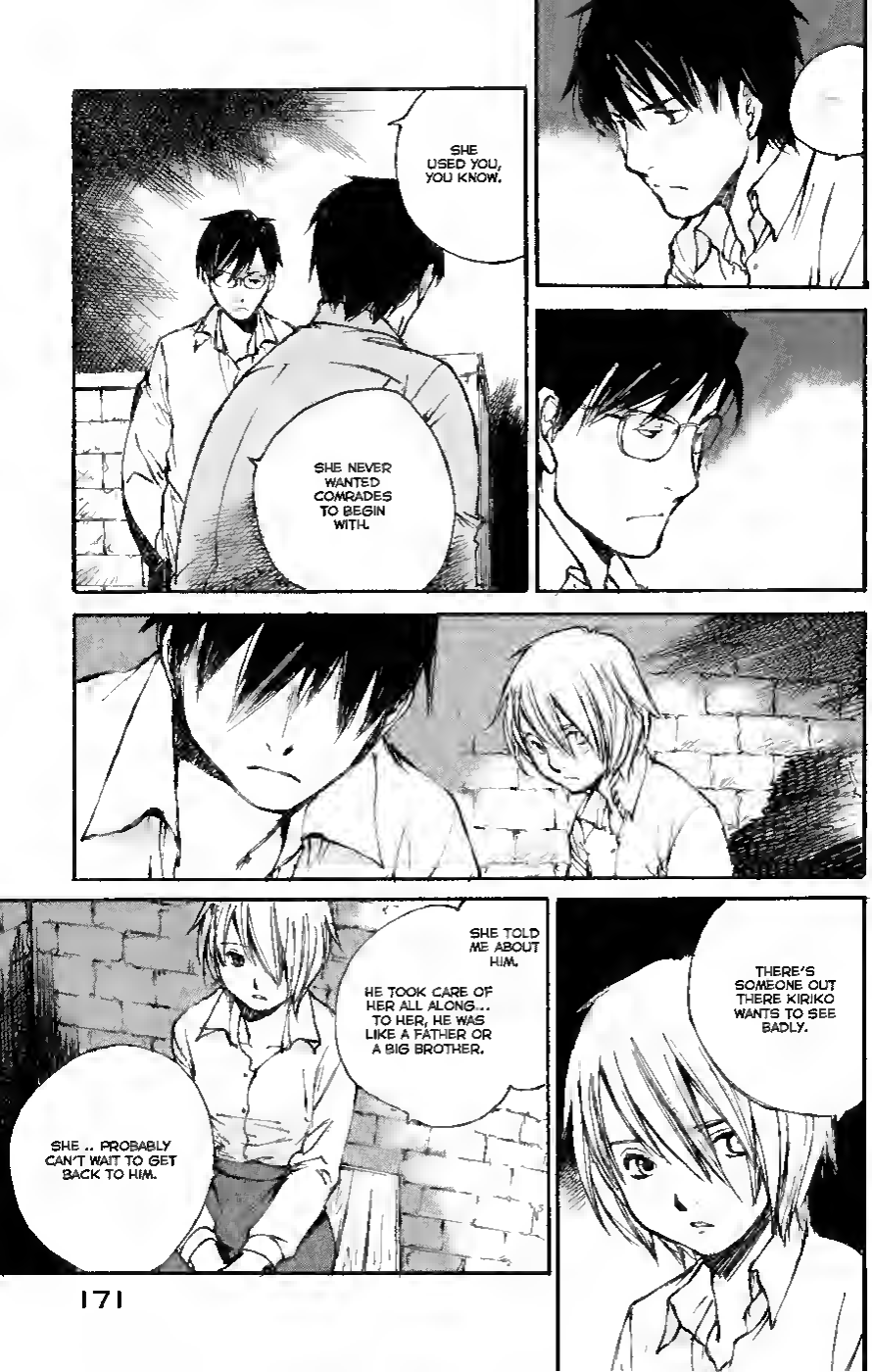
KIRIKO.

KIRIKO?
... YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME?
ガッ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
ARE YOU COMPLETELY INSANE?!

YOU IDIOT!
I NEVER ASKED YOU TO DO THIS.
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR YOU!
AND YET YOU CAME HERE NONCHALANTLY.
I'M PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF LEAVING THIS PLACE BY MYSELF...

I THOUGHT
YOU REALLY HAD ABANDONED ME THIS TIME
WE'RE NOT SAFE YET.
COME ON, LET'S GO.
GO? WHERE TO?

MAYBE WE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM MEETING HERE FOR SOME TIME.
IT'S FINE IF SHE WANTS TO GO IT ALONE. .
BUT CAUTION HER NOT TO DO ANYTHING RASH.
I'M GONNA TRY TO PERSUADE HER ONE MORE TIME.
HINATSU LEFT THE GROUP.
THERE'S NO NEED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION SECRETLY ANYMORE.


SHE USED YOU, YOU KNOW.
SHE NEVER WANTED COMRADES TO BEGIN WITH.
SHE TOLD ME ABOUT HIM.
HE TOOK CARE OF HER ALL ALONG... TO HER, HE WAS LIKE A FATHER OR A BIG BROTHER.
SHE .. PROBABLY CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK TO HIM.
THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE KIRIKO WANTS TO SEE BADLY.

I'M SURE IT'S BECAUSE OF HIM THAT SHE'S SO DETERMINED.
THEY ARE LIKE RELATIVES TO ME.
I NEED TO DO THAT.
WHATEVER, I'M GONNA TALK TO HER ANYWAY.
SEE IF I CAN BRING HER ROUND TO JOINING US AGAIN.
I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO GO THAT FAR.

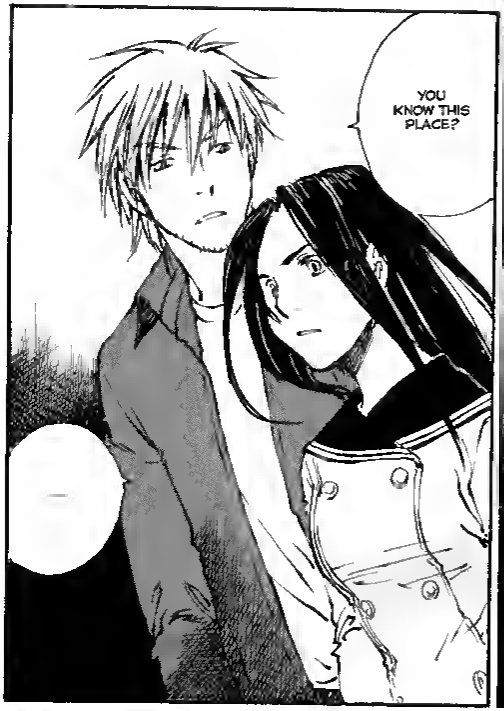
WHEN KIRIKO TRIED TO ESCAPE --
-- SHE ASKED ME TO COME ALONG --
-- BUT I COULDN'T DO IT
THAT'S ONLY NATURAL
IT WAS THE SECOND TIME. LONG AGO...
THE FIRST TIME SHE RAN AWAY, SHE ASKED ME THE SAME THING
YOU SEE...
I COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT SHE SAID .. AND I DIDN'T WANT TO ABANDON YOU TWO...
MOREOVER, I WAS SCARED.
SHE LOOKED ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYE --
-- AND SAID "LET'S RUN AWAY FROM HERE TOGETHER."

BUT... I COULDN'T DO IT.
-- WHEN I SAW HER
THAT'S WHY I WAS SO INTRIGUED --
BUT THIS FEELING WAS PUSHED TO THE BACK OF MY MEMORY...
AND EVENTUALLY I FORGOT ABOUT IT.
THE DAY AFTER SHE WAS GONE --
-- I FELT UNEASY WHEN EVERYTHING WENT ON AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.
I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT MYSELF --
-- BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT, WHATEVER MIGHT HAPPEN, I'LL REGRET IT WHEN KIRIKO'S GONE...
ONLY THIS TIME, I WON'T BE ABLE TO FORGET.

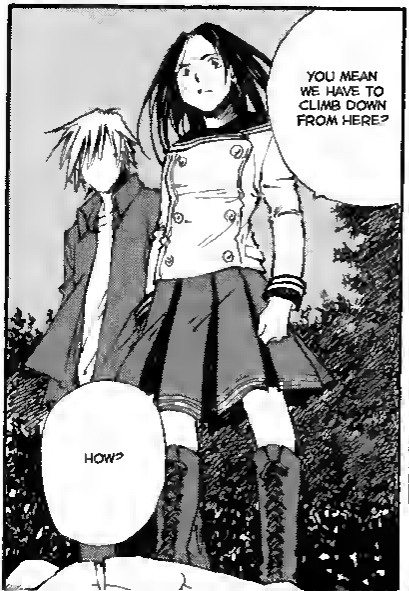
... BUT I GUESS SHE WON'T SAY "LET'S RUN AWAY TOGETHER"
-- I DON'T QUITE GET IT --
-- BUT I CAN SEE THAT YOU'RE FIXATED ON HER
IF YOU WANT TO PERSUADE HER, SUIT YOURSELF.

ガサ
BUT
THIS IS ..

Chapter3
逃走 #6
ESCAPE

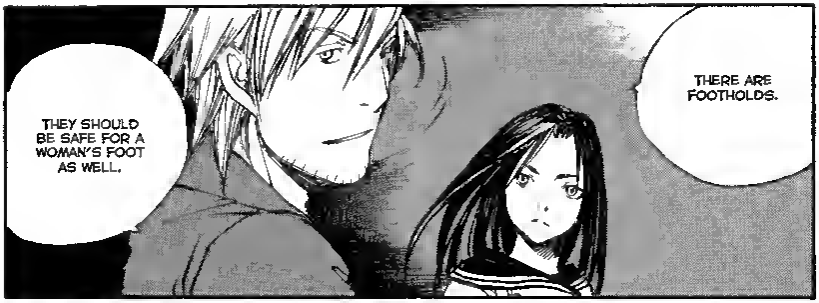

YOU KNOW THIS PLACE?
—

BUT THIS IS...

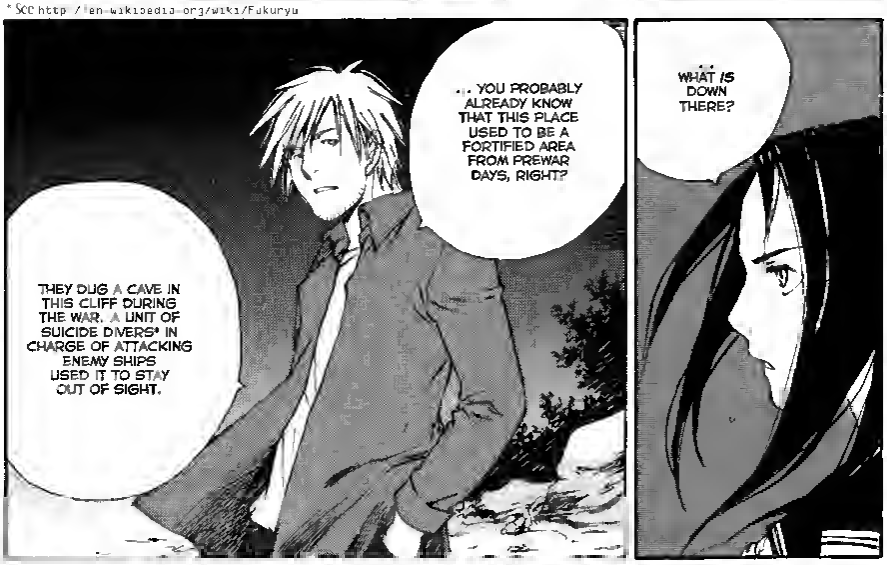

YOU MEAN WE HAVE TO CLIMB DOWN FROM HERE?
HOW?

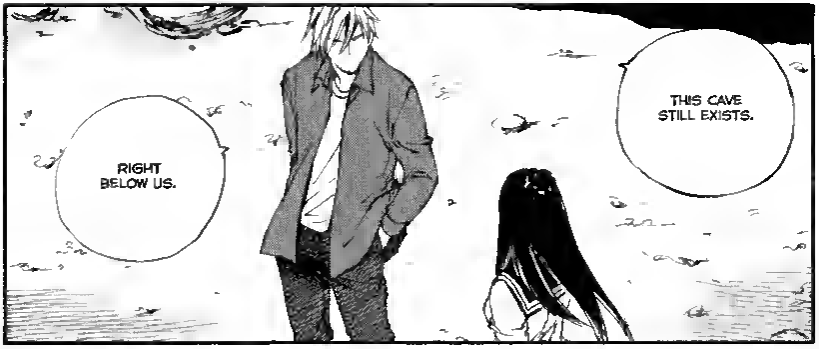
I HEARD THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING HERE, BUT...

THERE IS. DOWN BELOW.

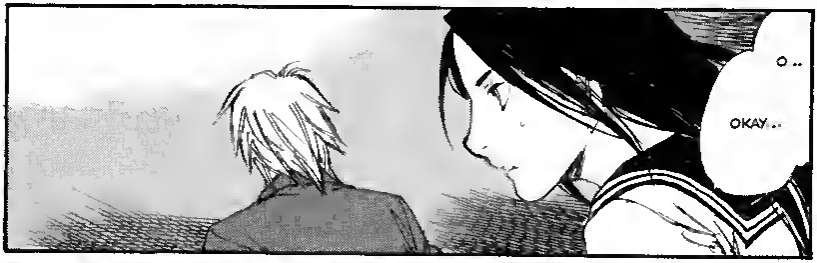


* SEE http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fukuryu


...WHAT IS DOWN THERE?
...YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW THAT THIS PLACE USED TO BE A FORTIFIED AREA FROM PREWAR DAYS, RIGHT?
THEY DUG A CAVE IN THIS CLIFF DURING THE WAR. A UNIT OF SUICIDE DIVERS* IN CHARGE OF ATTACKING ENEMY SHIPS USED IT TO STAY OUT OF SIGHT.



STICK CLOSE TO ME AND YOU'LL BE FINE
LET'S GO IT'S DARK SO WATCH YOUR STEP.
AH...
IT'S HIDDEN AT HIGH TIDE AND CAN'T BE SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE.

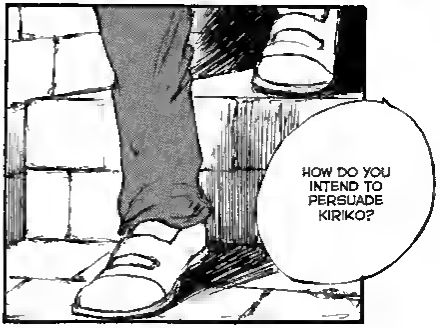

O..
OKAY..

HI

THERE! COME!
THE FOOT-HOLDS ARE QUITE GOOD, BUT WE SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR THE WIND.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? COME ON, HURRY!
NAGI...
HM?
WAIT FOR ME.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

WHAAAT?
THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE I MUST TAKE WITH ME.
WHA...?!
HEY! KIRIKO!

IT WON'T BE EASY, THOUGH.
MAYBE WE SHOULD COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF PLAN AND APPROACH HER WITH IT...


HOW DO YOU INTEND TO PERSUADE KIRIKO?

I KNOW THAT.
-- SHE WON'T RECIPRO-CATE YOUR FEELINGS.
MAKI, NO MATTER HOW FIXATED YOU ARE ON HER --
I WONDER IF KIRIKO WILL COME BACK TO US WITH THIS?
WELL...
I TOO HAVE KNOWN YOU SINCE CHILD-HOOD, MAKI.
IF SO, I COULD SAY THE SAME THING TO YOU OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
WHY ARE YOU SO OBSESSED WITH HER?
IS IT BECAUSE SHE ASKED YOU TO RUN AWAY WITH HER?

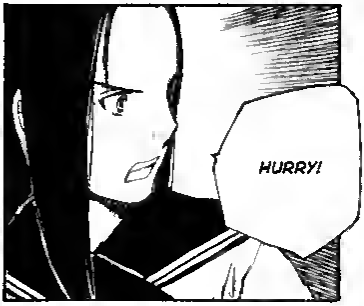
I'M NOT ANGRY.
THIS IS NOT ANGER.
HUH... WHAT...?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, MEI.
WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
SO, WHY?
WHY KIRIKO?
...
I DON'T KNOW.
THEN WHAT IS IT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF. .

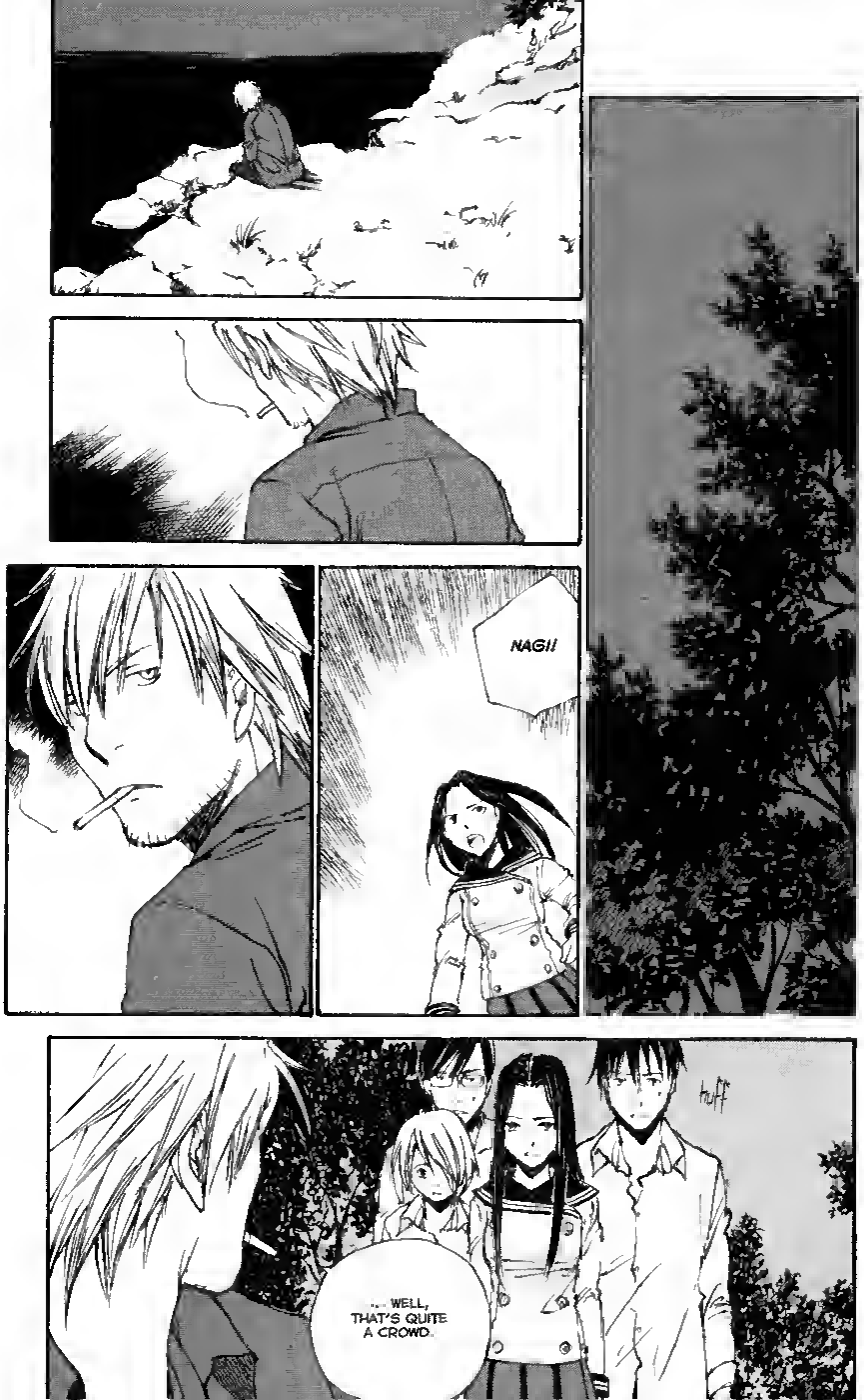
{clatter}
WHO GOES THERE?!
KIRIKO!

COME WITH ME!
WE'RE GOING TO ESCAPE FROM HERE.
GOOD! YOU'RE STILL HERE.
WHY ARE YOU. .

BUT. .
WHAT'S GOING ON?
COME ON! THERE'S NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS

WHAT?


HURRY!


NAGI!
huff
... WELL, THAT'S QUITE A CROWD.

HEY. . THIS IS WHERE NATSUME. .
Y. . YEAH.
. .
ALL RIGHT, LET'S MOVE.
HURRY UP, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
I THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW, BUT BELOW US IS THE SEA.
WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT FALL DOWN!

WHAT?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
FOLLOW YOU?

IT'S OKAY-- YOU CAN TRUST HIM. FOLLOW US!

I'LL EXPLAIN LATER. IN ANY CASE, IF YOU WANT TO ESCAPE, JUST FOLLOW US.

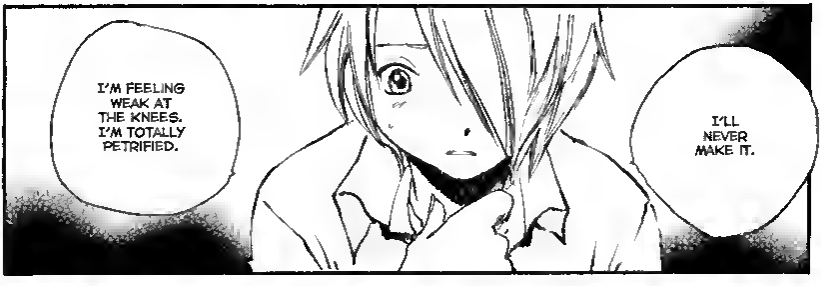
ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S SOMETHING DOWN THERE?

...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? HURRY!

KIRIKO. .

MEI...
I...
I CAN'T...
KIRIKO'S FRIEND FROM THE OUTSIDE MUST HAVE COME TO RESCUE HER.
HE SEEMS TO KNOW A WAY OUT. LET'S GO.


I'M FEELING WEAK AT THE KNEES. I'M TOTALLY PETRIFIED.
I'LL NEVER MAKE IT.

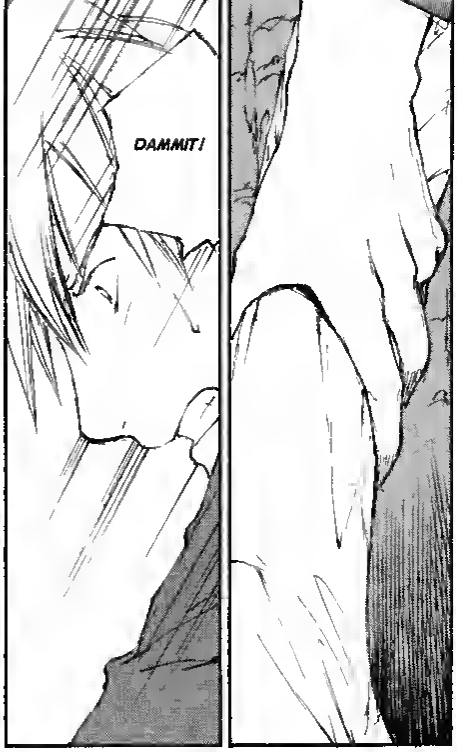
I'LL CARRY YOU ON MY BACK.

I'M HEAVIER AND STRONGER THAN YOU.
MEI IS LIGHT, I'LL BE FINE.
BUT. . .
YOU'RE NEAR-SIGHTED, RYO. I'LL CARRY MEI.
YOU OKAY, RYO?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, DON'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF THE PATH!

SORRY, RYO...
IT'S FINE. JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES.
JUST A BIT MORE KEEP GOING
THIS MUST BE THE MAN MEI TOLD US ABOUT...

SHE CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK TO HIM.
I WONDER WHY HE HAS WHITE HAIR?
IN ANY CASE, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE AN ORDINARY MAN..
HE TOOK CARE OF KIRIKO AFTER SHE ESCAPED FROM THE ACADEMY....
...
SHE USED YOU, YOU KNOW
AH!

!
AAH!!


DAMMIT!

ARE YOU OKAY? ARE YOU HURT?

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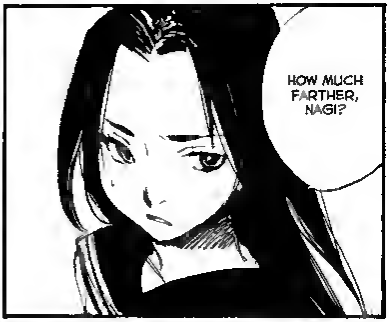
MAKI!

huff

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MAKI?
Y...
YEAH...
はあ


HOW MUCH FARTHER, NAGI?

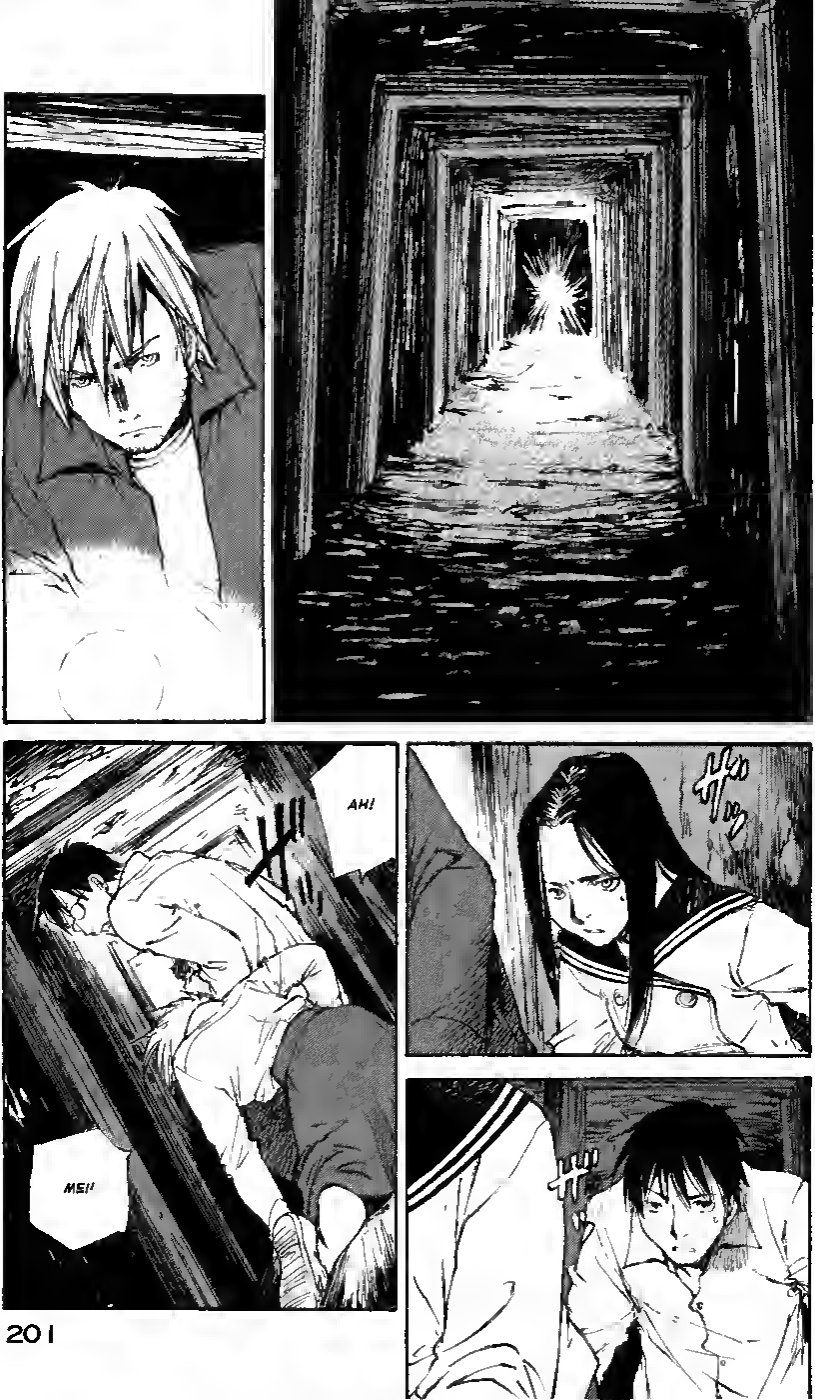
YOU CAN SEE IT OVER THERE

A CAVE?
IT LEADS TO THE NEARBY US MILITARY BASE.

Chapter 3 逃走 #7
ESCAPE

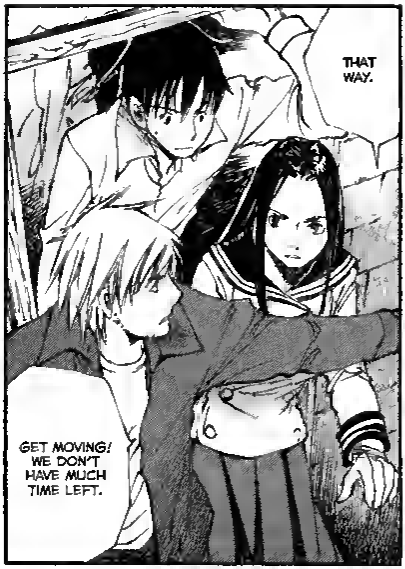
OH... GOOD EVENING
HARD AT IT, I SEE

MORNING, ACTUALLY.
IT'S 3 AM.
MORNING...?
IT'S EVENING, ISN'T IT?
IT'S ROUGH BEING A JANITOR- WORKING THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING...
EH...?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HUH...?

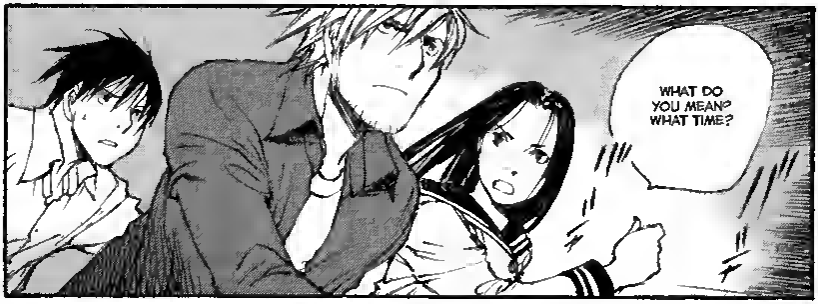

AH!
MEI!

YOU GO AHEAD.
Y-YEAH.. I'M FINE.
ARE YOU OKAY, MEI?
I KNEW FOR A LONG TIME THAT THERE WAS A CAVE, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE IT LED. I MANAGED TO LOOK OVER OLD MAPS, AND THE PLANS OF THE BASE.
NAGI
HOW COME I NEVER HEARD OF THIS CAVE BEFORE?
A-ARE YOU A GRADUATE FROM THIS SCHOOL, TOO?

I RAN AWAY WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN.
WATER...
...
AHEAD OF US LIES THE OLD SEWER SYSTEM.
IS IT OPEN?
YUP.


THAT WAY.
GET MOVING! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT.

AFTER I BREAK IT.

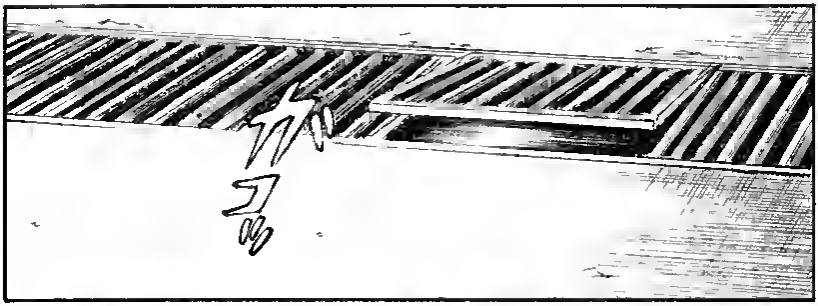

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT TIME?

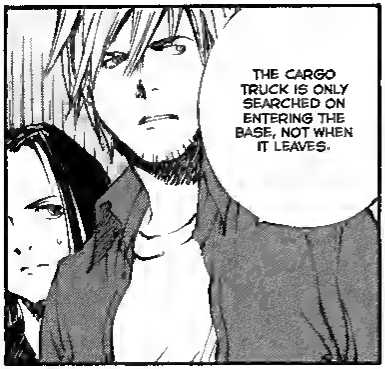
TIME UNTIL THE CARGO TRUCK THAT GOES IN AND OUT OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY BASE LEAVES
ONCE WE ENTER THE BASE, THE SCHOOL WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP US.

WE CHECKED THE SECURITY CAMERAS, BUT THEY DON'T SHOW ANYTHING.
THE GUARDS HAVE BEEN SEARCHING THE SCHOOL'S SURROUNDINGS NONSTOP.

IT'S NAGI.
HE WON'T BE CAUGHT THAT EASILY.

HE'LL DO EVERYTHING HE CAN TO ESCAPE.




THE CARGO TRUCK IS ONLY SEARCHED ON ENTERING THE BASE, NOT WHEN IT LEAVES.

NOW LISTEN.
FOLLOW ME AS SOON AS I START RUNNING.

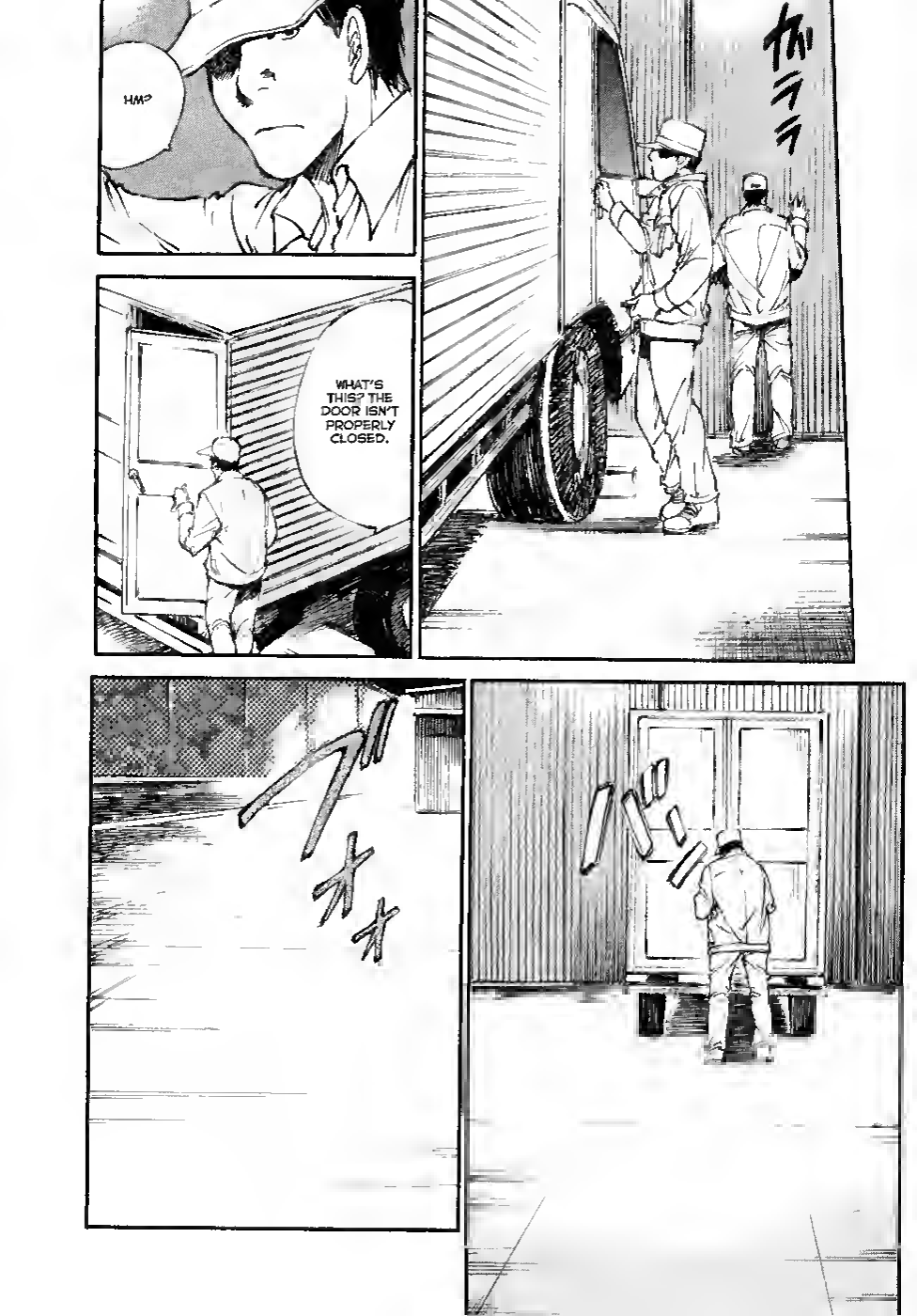
...
ARE YOU OKAY?
THIS TIME YOU CAME...

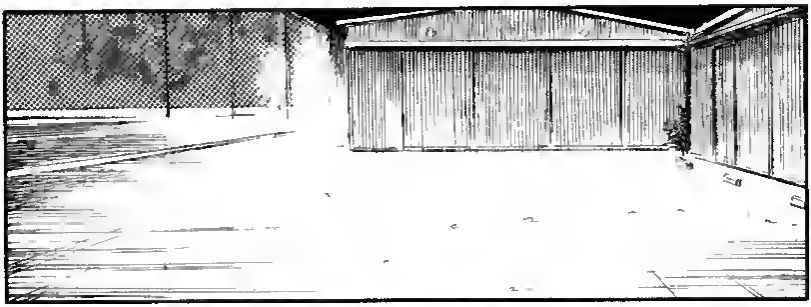
RUN!

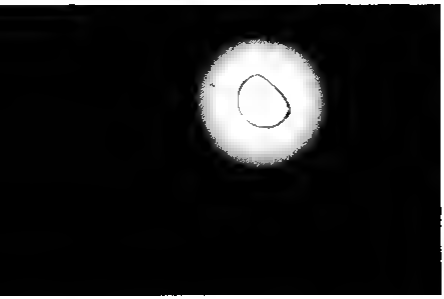
MEI?

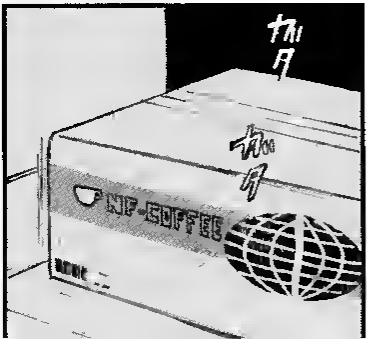
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MEI? COME ON!
HURRY UP! THEY'LL COME BACK!
I'M... NOT GOING
YOU GO, RYO.
QUICK!

I'M SORRY.
PLEASE, RYO. JUST GO.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE CAME THIS FAR...
WHA...?
NO, WAIT!
THEY'RE NOT...
I'M CLOSING THE DOOR!
RYO!
TOO LATE! THEY'RE BACK!
BUT...
THOSE TWO ARE STILL...
JUST GIVE UP.


HM?
WHAT'S THIS? THE DOOR ISN'T PROPERLY CLOSED.
ガララ
ブオオ
バン!!






NP-COFFEE

THE SUN SHOULD BE UP SOON.

RYO AND MEI...
I WONDER IF THEY ARE ALL RIGHT...
THEY PROBABLY TURNED AROUND AND WENT BACK TO THE SCHOOL
I'D WORRY IF MEI WAS BY HERSELF, BUT SINCE RYO IS WITH HER, I'M SURE THEY'RE OKAY...
HEY, HIDE YOURSELVES.
THEY'RE GOING TO UNLOAD CARGOS AGAIN AT THE NEXT SERVICE AREA.
THAT'S WHERE WE'LL GET OUT.
WHAT DO WE DO AFTER THAT?
MY PAL'S WAITING FOR US WITH A CAR.
I CAN'T ESCAPE ALONE.

HEY, MAN!
YOU CAN'T FEEL SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED FOREVER.
YOU HAVE TO THINK OF YOURSELF NOW.

SOROS
ACADEMY